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DIANA'S LOOKING GLASS, AND
OTHER POEMS.

Mrs. Morse
With the Author's
very kind regards.
Christine 1894

By the Same Author.

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DIANA'S LOOKING GLASS AND OTHER POEMS

BY

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RECTOR OF CHELTENHAM; HONORARY CANON
OF CARLISLE; AUTHOR OF "POEMS
OLD AND NEW," ETC.



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PREFACE.

IF neither profit nor fame be gained by the publication of the following poems, yet shall I not be without a certain reward, for there is a pleasure in giving expression to that passion for truth and beauty which is the heritage of all. But this, it may be said, might be done, and be considered an adequate reward in itself, without an appeal to the public. True; but there is a craving for sympathy in every heart, and with this, a hope that others may be interested in what has been a source of intellectual or spiritual enjoyment to ourselves. This is the idea expressed by Akenside in his poem, "The Pleasures of Imagination," when he speaks of

"The wish of Poets when their tongue
Would teach to other's bosom what so charms
Their own."

It is possible, without estimating it too highly, to hope that the poem which pleases ourselves, may also give pleasure to others. This, indeed, I have found to be the case.

A few of the poems in this volume have appeared elsewhere and in another form, and for permission to insert one of these, a Chorale for the Cheltenham Triennial Musical Festival, set to music by Mr. Berthold Tours, and published by Messrs. Novello, my thanks are due to the publishers.

I will only add, in the words of the Latin poet :

“Nos tristia vitæ
Solamur cantu.”

C. D. BELL.

AMBLESIDE,

Sept. 1894.

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DIANA'S LOOKING GLASS.

(LOUGHRIGG TARN.)

“**D**IANA'S Looking Glass,”—this fitting name
Our English Poet gave this lovely mere,
Set like a sapphire in an emerald frame,
Fair as Lake Nemi in whose waters clear
Are glass'd Italian hills, and skies serene,
Cypress and myrtle groves, and ilex green.

Close to this little Tarn lie valleys fair,
Imperial hills, on which the red-boled pine
Spreads out its fragrant branches on the air,
And tassel'd larches mass'd in stately line,
Bend o'er their shadows in the azure lake,
Which mirrors lovingly both bush and brake.

Beauty makes this her home :—not far away
The Langdales lift their Pikes above the vale,
First of the hills to catch the glimm'ring day,
That newly waken'd, smiles o'er all the dale,

When giant crag, and cliff, and upland lawn,
Blush with the glowing tints of ruddy dawn.

Well might the Goddess leave th' Olympian Mount,
The balmier air, the bluer, cloudless skies,
And with her vestal nymphs seek this fair fount,
This Tarn which in the shade of Loughrigg lies,
Here loose the sandals from her shining feet,
And plunge into its waters cool and sweet.

And in this Tarn, as in a mirror bright,
The Goddess might behold her form and face,
Beauties fresh bathed, and glowing in the light,
Her crimson lips, her cheeks of rounded grace,
The large clear eyes beneath a forehead low,
The gleaming shoulders white as drifts of snow.

Here too, Endymion might have follow'd her,
And in these pastures fed his white-fleeced sheep,
Or, sleeping 'neath the aromatic fir,
The silver moon might watch above him keep,
Or leave the skies for the green alder grove,
To whisper in his ears her tale of love.

For all is solitude : no eye to see
The unveiled beauties of the huntress queen,
No foot to break upon her privacy,
Since he would die beneath her arrows keen,

Who on disrobed divinity should gaze,
Or in an instant perish 'neath its blaze.

And there is charm in these far northern hills,
Splendour of lake, and glen, and shelter'd dell,
Music of many waters, as the rills
Flash foaming down the crag and fern-clad fell,
To tempt a goddess from the happy Isles
Where winds blow balm, and summer ever smiles.

I dream.—No Oread haunteth now the groves,
To Pan's sweet reed no nymphs dance on the shore,
Venus has left the earth with all her doves,
Apollo's tuneful lyre is heard no more,
But while "Diana's Looking Glass" remains,
Beauty will consecrate these hills and plains.

GRASMERE FROM RED BANK.

I SEE the valley down below
All flooded with the sunshine's glow,
By which each hill is crown'd,
And ask, "Is Paradise again
Come back to bless the sons of men?"
Such beauty breathes around.

The placid Lake whose waters deep
Double each crag and every steep,
 Has one green Island fair,
Whose branching firs as dark as night,
Are nets to catch the quiv'ring light,
 And keep it prison'd there.

Its wave reflects the hues of heav'n,
From rosy morn till purple even,
 When stars within it gleam,
Above, beneath, all is so calm,
The stillness thrills me like a psalm
 Heard through a happy dream.

Sweet Silver How with emerald crown,
Its slopes pine-clad looks smiling down,
 On field and fold and cot,
And rugged Helm-Crag robed in green,
Its Lion, warder of the scene,
 Guards well this lovely spot.

Beyond the crest of Dunmail Raise
Where many a little sunbeam plays,
 Blencathra rises high,
And there from Easedale just in sight,
Rushes a foaming torrent white,
 Which takes and charms the eye.

I see the ancient House of prayer,
A doubly hallow'd place, for there
Our Wordsworth bow'd the head,
The Churchyard holds his honoured grave,
A man as simple, true and brave,
As sleeps among the dead.

His darling Rotha ripples near,
And singeth low, and singeth clear,
The song it sang to him ;
We love it better for his sake,
And tender memories awake,
Until the eyes grow dim.

Thus as I muse, within the breast
A sense ineffable of rest
Is sweetly shed abroad,
And on these slopes where I recline,
Nature herself has built a shrine,
Wherein to worship God.

This perfect scene so pure and fair,
An Oratory is for prayer
Where sorrows wane and cease,
For God seems bending from above
To let the heart take in His love,
His love and perfect peace.

A LEGEND OF THE LAKES.

F AIR was she as an opening day
Blushing with joy to find it May.

Sweet was she as some red June rose,
Ere all its crimson buds uncloze.

Her hair was bright as ruddy morn,
In colour rich as the August corn.

Through a bosom fair as drifted snow,
All gracious thoughts did come and go.

Her heart looked out of clear frank eyes,
Filled with all happy memories.

She was a noble Baron's child,
Who ruled o'er many a waste and wild,

And o'er broad acres rich and fair,
To which fair Hilda was sole heir.

The Baron's castle darkly stood
Close to the waters, near a wood,

Through which there foamed with headlong course
The rapid stream of Ara Force,

That rushed by many a bush and brake,
Till rest it found within the lake.

Here Hilda up to woman grew ;
Many her joys, her sorrows few.

She knew the great depths of the wood,
And where the ring-dove reared her brood ;

Where the first violet was found,
And rare long purples deck'd the ground ;

Where cuckoo-buds and harebells grew,
And purple fox-gloves held the dew.

Full many a suitor sought her grace,
But in her heart none found a place :

The same kind smile on all she bent,
Then on her way passed well content.

As cold she seemed as Alpine snow
Without the Alpine rose's glow.

Sir Wilfrid woo'd her, loved her too,
As well as such a man could do ;

Loved her, but scarce as much as self :
Loved her, but also loved her pelf.

A man he was of craven soul,
Would win by means or fair or foul.

He woo'd and woo'd, but him she loathed,
Would rather death were her betrothed.

So she said "No," and "No," and "No,"
Yet paled before his look of woe.

Right wroth was he, and nursed the ire
Which in his bosom burned like fire.

Came there at length a gallant knight,
Gentle in peace, and brave in fight,

With air like Michael's when he drew
His sword to smite the dragon through.

Sir Lyulph saw the maiden sweet,
Adored the ground beneath her feet ;

Lived in the light of her clear eyes—
Her presence was like Paradise.

And she? Ah, now love's morning broke
O'er Memnon, and the music woke,

And thrilled and throbbed through every chord,
Till passion's deepest depths were stirred.

His absence was delicious pain ;
His presence sunshine after rain.

And as he spake the tender word,
Which all her quivering pulses stirred,

Low, earnest, truthful, as was meet,
Her trembling lips made answer sweet.

'Twas spring-time now ; voluptuous June
Would bring them near their marriage moon.

The days were numbered as they passed,
And each was brighter than the last.

The spring died out, and summer came,
And all the gardens were aflame.

Hedge-rows grew sweet with flowers fair,
That flung warm scents upon the air.

The weeks passed on ; but now from far
Came summons to the holy war,

Waged by a brave and faithful band
To wrench from Turkish power the land

Where Christ the Saviour lived and died,
Was mocked, and scourged, and crucified.

And Lyulph, knight of grace, must go
To battle with the Paynim foe.

They parted, and fair Eden's gate
Seemed closed to leave them desolate.

Sir Wilfrid with Sir Lyulph went ;
Friends both in name, they shared one tent.

But Lyulph recked not of the dole
That wrung to torture Wilfrid's soul,

Nor knew what evil things lurked there,
Beneath a face so bland and fair.

In many a bloody field they fought,
And many a deed of valour wrought ;

And side by side upon the plain
Left many a Paynim foeman slain.

But once, when Lyulph, over-bold,
Attacked the infidel in his hold,

Sir Wilfrid followed not, but there
Left him the battle's brunt to bear,

And hoped the avenging Turk might slay
Sir Lyulph in the bloody fray.

Back Lyulph came not : none could tell
If prisoner made, or if he fell

In combat slain—all knew him bold ;
If dead, that dear his life he sold.

The weeks went on, till ten months lay
Between that venture and the day

When Wilfrid, without page or state,
Came riding to the castle gate,

With troubled air, and all alone,
With sable plumes, on charger roan.

How could he his sad story tell
In Hilda's ears? It struck the knell

Of hope and love : of all, in sooth,
That lent a joy to her fair youth.

It smote her helpless to the ground,
And failed at once sense, sight, and sound.

They placed her pale upon the bed,
She lay for days and days as dead.

But in the struggle life o'ercame,
She rose at length, but not the same.

A stricken thing in piteous case,
With great sad eyes and white wan face,

And the light step, that erst did go
Swift as a fawn's, grew dull and slow.

'Twas living death ; all hope was slain,
Would never bud or bloom again.

It now became her only joy,
And one that never seemed to cloy,

To sit and hear Sir Wilfrid's tale,
With weeping eyes and face all pale.

How Lyulph bore him in the fight,
His deeds of prowess and of might.

How he was first to storm the breach,
And fired his men by deeds and speech.

She listened well,—the widowed bride ;
And through her tears she flushed with pride

To hear of him, the true and brave,
Who held her heart within his grave.

But most of all she loved to hear,
Often repeated in her ear,

His messages of love to her—
Then would her bosom throb and stir.

So Wilfrid gained upon her grace,
As looking daily in her face,

He told the story of her lord,
And deeds wrought by his valiant sword,

And how he saw her Lyulph die—
Heard his last words—received his sigh ;

And o'er his dying form bent low
To wipe the death-sweat from his brow.

And as she listened, listened still,
And knew her father's wish—his will,

She quelled the bitter inward strife,
And gave her word to be his wife ;

But yet she wept her woman's tears,
And trembled with her woman's fears.

At length within the church they stood,
She in her young sweet womanhood ;

And oh, so fair—so wondrous fair,
In robe of silvery sheen—her hair,

With diamonds flashed, and pearls all white
Lay on her breast like softened light.

Rich was his garb, as well became
A belted knight of warlike fame :

And in good sooth he seemed to be
True knight in grace and courtesy.

When the far-chiming bells had ceased
In Mary's Chapel stood the priest,

A holy man, and old and grey,
And 'gan the solemn words to say.

But ere the troth-ring he had given,
And they were one in sight of Heaven,

There came a sudden hurried tread,
So loud, it might have waked the dead

Who slept, each in his shroud, alone,
Beneath the sacred chancel stone.

A knight, all armed, strode up the aisle,
His helmet doff'd, and with a smile

That burned defiant, like a flame,
As on with steady pace he came ;

And then a stern deep voice was heard,
That through each bosom thrilled and stirred ;

“ Hold, hold, Sir Priest, or by my faith,
Another word shall be thy death—

“ By promise, oath, and vow, and sign,
I claim this bride, for she is mine.

“ This perjured, forsworn, craven knight,
Like some foul ulcer hurts the sight.

“ False in deed, and false in word,
With him I deign to cross no sword.

“ Let him pass out through yonder gate,
Object of loathing and of hate.”

Sir Wilfrid like an aspen shook,
With awe-struck eyes and ashen look,

Half drew his sword from out its sheath,
Then paused with quick and labouring breath.

But Hilda, pale as some wan moon
That seems within night's arms to swoon,

Would down have fall'n upon the ground,
Had not her maidens gathered round,

And held her up a little space,
Clasped in their warm and fast embrace.

Out spoke the priest, and trembling said,
"Art living man, or from the dead?"

"Who art thou? Who? On battle plain
Sir Lyulph lies amongst the slain.

"This gallant knight did see him die,
And closed his eyes."—"Sir Priest, that lie

"I thrust back in his throat,—his heart,
Ah! craven soul! thou well mayst start;

"A scorn and proverb be thy name,
Hence in thy self-contempt and shame!"

He then with arms all opened wide,
Turned to the place where stood the bride,

And spoke: "Hilda, my love, my life,
I claim thee here my bride, my wife.

“ Say, am I not thine own,—thine own ?
Art thou not mine alone,—alone ?

“ Lo, in this holy place I stand,
Art thou not mine both heart and hand ?

“ If thou art true, and lov’st me still,
Art here ’gainst heart, if not ’gainst will,

“ Come to this true and loving breast,
Here lay thy head down, love, and rest.”

A cry through choir and chancel rang—
Into his folding arms she sprang,

And with a sense of joy and pain,
Felt her heart beat ’gainst his again.

All heaven seemed opened to them there,
Within that house of holy prayer.

Sir Wilfrid meantime shrunk away,
To hate and jealousy a prey ;

A perjured, coward, selfish soul :
What was for him save bitter dole ?

All good men's loathing, true men's scorn,
He passed forth friendless and forlorn.

Then Lyulph took the craven's place,
With Hilda in her pure, sweet grace,

And ere they left God's House of prayer,
The priest had bless'd them kneeling there ;

The words were said, the token given,
And they were one in sight of heaven.

MUSIC.

THE earth is full of music pure and sweet,
That rises like a sacred hymn to heav'n,
Or anthem perfect in its rhythmic beat
Sounding from early dawn till close of even.

The night, too, has its songs for open'd ears,
The measured music of a thrilling psalm.
Melodious harmonies of silver spheres,
That sound through Nature's temple vast and calm.

The waters have a voice, so has the breeze
Which kisses till it wakes the sleeping mere,
And birds that carol in the leafy trees
Chanting their matin hymns in voices clear.

Murmurs of bees that suck the honey'd flow'rs
From blush of morn till daisies close their eyes,
Whispers of rain that fall in cooling showers,
And God's dread thunders crashing in the skies.

But richer far in music than them all,
The Poet's song with truth and wisdom fraught,
In which is heard the clear and clarion call
That stirs to noble deeds and lofty thought.

Master of song, that teaches to aspire,
To leave the level valleys far below,
And with a heart that burns with sacred fire,
To climb the heights with sunshine all aglow.

TO THE THRUSH.

O MINSTREL Thrush, whose matin song
Is silver sweet and clear and strong,
Who will for me translate the note
That gushes from thy mellow throat?

The green leaves tremble on the thorn,
Wet with the dews of early morn,
From which is heard the dulcet voice,
Whose music makes the woods rejoice.

I fain would know what theme divine
Inspires that glorious chant of thine,
Which thrilling on the vernal air,
Might charm its sorrow from despair.

Dost hail the advent of the spring,
When swallows wheel upon the wing,
And clouds whose treasures wept in dew,
Earth's fair, immortal youth renew?

Or sendest through the deep-leaved grove,
Delicious canzonets of love,
Which throbbing on from bough to bough,
Bear to thy mate the tender vow?

Haply thou canst not choose but sing,
And make the woodland echoes ring,
Thy joyous heart must needs declare
The rapture and the passion there.

O warbler of the sweetest lay
That ever hailed an April day,
Teach me the sympathetic art,
By song of mine to touch the heart.

Would I could soothe by some soft strain,
The sorrow born of grief and pain,
Would that like thine my voice could flow
To some sad soul, and cheer its woe.

Ah, happy Bird, to have the power,
Seated within thy cloistered bower,
Round thee such melody to raise,
As turns heart-sadness into praise.

THE MORNING OPES THE GATES OF DAY.

THE Morning opes the gates of day,
 Whence issue forth the rosy hours,
 To strew sweet odours on their way,
 And wake to life the sleeping flow'rs
 That closed at eve.

Up, slug-abed ; arise, arise,
 The lark long since is in the blue,
 His matins chanting in the skies,
 Greeting the world now born anew
 To loveliness.

And not a single bough is mute,
 The song-birds sing in ev'ry tree ;
 The Black-cap, sweet as any flute,
 Thrushes athrill with love and glee,
 Bid thee awake.

But all the beauty of the day,
 The lilt of birds that gaily sing,
 Lack something whiles thou art away,
 Nor joy nor rapture will they bring,
 Till thou dost come.

She wakes ! She stirs ! Her voice I hear ;
 'Tis sweeter far than that sweet bird's
 That sings beneath the moonlight clear,
 And she—Ah ! she outstrips all words,
 My love ! She comes !

ECHO.

COME, let us wake sweet Echo with a song,
 Here she lies sleeping, waiting for our voice,
 So call her loudly with a courteous tongue,
 That coming forth she may with us rejoice,
 For Morning walks in beauty o'er the dale,
 And Night's bright glories 'fore her splendours pale.
 Nymph of the hills, awake, awake !
 Melodious answer to us make.

What shall we sing to please the maiden shy,
 And lure her from the secret solitude
 In which she dwells withdrawn from ev'ry eye,
 Amidst the deep recesses of the wood
 In whose green boughs is heard the joyous lay
 Of merry birds that greet the dawn of day ?
 Echo, sweet Echo, hear our strain ;
 Thy voice is bliss ; thy silence pain.

Of Nature shall we sing? its hills and dells,
Its gleams and glooms, its stars, or blazing sun,
The murm'ring whispers of its bubbling wells,
Its streams that through the flow'ry meadows run ;
Of Spring's green buds, blue bells, and glossy leaves,
Summer's ripe fruits, and Autumn's garner'd sheaves.
Louder, O friends, and say we wait,
Expectant at her silent gate.

Or shall we sing of love? How Corydon,
The shepherd boy, the fair Althea woo'd,
How beauteous Thyrsis fair Nerissa won,
Or fleet Alpheus Arethuse pursued,
Or Cynthia stoop'd from heav'n with looks of love,
While slept Endymion in the Latmian grove.
Hark, Comrades, hark, with such a theme,
Steal softly on the dreamer's dream.

Or shall we sing the pleasures of the chase,
The horn of hunter, and the bay of hound,
Or sing the heat, and ardours of the race,
As spurns the mettled steed the turfy ground,
With songs like these well may the welkin ring,
As we in joyous numbers gaily sing.
Hear ye her voice? 'Tis here ! 'Tis there !
Ah ! now it fills th' enchanted air.

SUMMER DAYS.

DEAR summer days. O days and night,
 Rich in a beauty infinite,
 I love your winds that odours bear
 From gardens fill'd with roses fair,
 And slender lilies tall and white.

To breathe your air is pure delight,
 Such beauty takes the ravish'd sight,
 Such loveliness is everywhere
 Dear summer days.

Thy splendours fill the earth with light,
 Sunbeams to heav'n make pathways bright,
 Each beam like to a golden stair,
 That leads through clear, and crystal air,
 Upward from cloudless height to height,
 Dear summer days.

AUTUMN.

O AUTUMN fair, most sad, most sweet,
 Sweeter than Spring when young lambs bleat,
 And ev'ry hedge is white with May,
 Tarry awhile, and with us stay,
 Fain would I bind thy flying feet.

Swallows have fled on pinions fleet,
 The Cuckoo sought a far retreat,
 Ah, why will you, too, haste away,
 O Autumn fair?

A winding-sheet thy leaves will form,
 Of gorgeous colours fit and meet
 For the dead year ; no shroud of grey,
 But one resplendent, bright, and gay,
 With gold and crimson dyes replete,
 O Autumn fair.

HERE IN THIS ROOM.

HERE in this room from day to day,
 I lie amid the shadows grey,
 And weary often, faint and ill,
 While time glides slowly as a rill
 Grown slender in the month of May.

Scarce know I what to wish or say,
 Sickness or health, for which to pray ;
 Sweet either, so it be His will,
 Here in this room.

A tear sometimes I dash away,
 As hear I children at their play,
 And long to join them on the hill,
 Or pluck with them the daffodil,
 Yet well content, O God, to stay
 Here in this room.

DEAR CHILD OF MINE.

DEAR Child of Mine, I hear thee say,
 Thou dost not know for what to pray,
 Sickness or health—Be not distrest,
 Still hold thy mind in perfect rest,
 “Thy strength shall be as is thy day”—

Surely this promise as a ray
 Of sunshine will light up thy way,
 Then clasp it closely to thy breast,
 Dear Child of Mine.

Should it not keep sad thoughts at bay,
 Thy Winter turn to bounteous May,
 To know that all is for the best?
 Let peace then be thy bosom's guest,
 For I will ever with thee stay,
 Dear Child of Mine.

WHICH SHALL IT BE ?

WHICH shall it be ? A life of ease
 With self, and only self to please,
 And fill'd with joys of sense and sight,
 With all that ministers delight,
 Or life for nobler things than these ?

To drink sweet wine upon the lees,
 Idly to sail on summer seas,
 Or climb from upward height to height,
 Which shall it be ?

The passing joys of earth to seize,
 Or search, till found, for wisdom's keys,
 To do the wrong, and spurn the right,
^{or} And keep a soul pure, stainless, white,
 Where holy thoughts hive thick as bees,
 Which shall it be ?

ALONE, ALONE !

ALONE, alone ; through all the years,
 With not a hand to dry the tears
 That wash the pallid cheek as white
 As snows upon some glacier height,
 When shoots the dawn in silver spears.

Lone as the boat the pilot steers
 Through wastes of seas, and unknown meres,
 When over all broods gloomy night !
 Alone, alone !

Oh, as the music of the spheres
 Were friendly voice within mine ears,
 For love would fill the world with light,
 As in the days when earth was bright,
 Nor sat I with dark boding fears—
 Alone, alone !

THE TEARS WILL FLOW.

THE tears will flow, I know not why,
 Nor what it is that makes me sigh,
 For all is bright, the day, the air,
 And all the winds sweet odours bear,
 And runs the stream with music by.

It is that thou, Love, art not nigh,
 This takes the sunshine from the sky,
 And casts a shadow everywhere,
 The tears will flow.

For once we stood here, thou and I,
 And wondered that the plover's cry
 Should be so sad. We knew not care,
 And all the world to us was fair,
 But since these days behind us lie,
 The tears will flow.

BEYOND THE DOOR.

BEYOND the door her voice I hear,
 Sweet as a songbird's, soft, and clear ;
 Ah, would that I could enter there,
 And gliding up the old oak stair,
 Pass to her side who has no peer.

But as I think of drawing near,
 I tremble with delicious fear,
 Oh, to steal on her unaware,
 Beyond the door !

But once to whisper in her ear,
 How dear she is,—how very dear ;
 Would she not listen to my prayer,
 Lift me to hope from dark despair,
 And turn to heaven, that unknown sphere
 Beyond the door ?

GIVE GOD THINE HEART.

GIVE God thine heart ! dark clouds will break,
 His love around thee sunshine make ;
 A light transfigure sea and shore,
 That never gleamed on them before,
 And songs within thy soul awake.

God for thy Guide and Guardian take
 He ne'er will leave thee or forsake ;
 Behold, He knocketh at the door.
 Give God thine heart !

Thy mind shall be like tranquil lake,
 Whose bosom no rude tempests shake,
 Nor blasts of winter ruffle o'er,
 And peace be thine for evermore :
 For love of Christ and His dear sake
 Give God thine heart !

CHRIST IN THE HEART.

CHRIST in the heart,—Ah, this gives rest,
 And fills with ease the troubled breast,
 Constrains us joyfully to sing,
 Blythe as a bird that soars on wing,
 Or plumes on trees its feathered crest.

Why should I ever be distressed,
 Or why with anxious thoughts oppressed,
 Since from all grief *this* takes the sting—
 Christ in the heart?

Dear God ! but grant me Christ as Guest,
 Then shall I be most richly blest ;
 And to Thy feet my life I'll bring,
 And lay it there an offering,
 Since of all gifts I have the best—
 Christ in the heart !

THE SEEKER AFTER GOD.

O H, for a voice in answer to my cries,
 To say whence comes this earth of living green,
 This flood of life that sweeps before the eyes,
 Systems and suns that stud the blue serene,
 Planets that in their order set and rise !
 Breathes there a Living Power behind this scene ?
 For Nature has, and here lies our despair,
 No solace for our griefs, no answer to our prayer.

Does no Hand in their orbits planets keep ?
 Has pray'r no power the tempest's rage to still ?
 Is there no voice to raise the dead from sleep ?
 No love in heav'n the hung'ring soul to fill,
 Glad when we smile, to pity when we weep ?
 Naught but inexorable Nature's will ?
 Did blind unreasoning chance, material force,
 Build up of old this glorious Universe ?

“Oh, that I knew where I might find Him !” Where
I might but force a pathway to His throne !
I ask the flow’rs, the grass, the whisp’ring air,
The hills, the valleys, and the woodlands lone.
Dumb are they all—No answer to my prayer—
In vain I call,—in vain I make my moan
To heav’n and earth, and all that in them are,
To ocean vast, to sun, and moon, and star.

I ask for Him at earliest flush of dawn,
When hill-tops catch the grey and glimmering light,
And dews ambrosial gem the fragrant lawn ;
I search for Him when falls the sombre night,
And o’er the songless woods a veil is drawn ;
But ever He withdraws Himself from sight—
I cry, “Where art Thou?” Echo mocks despair,
And fills with babble all the empty air.

But if I cannot find Him, I must die,
Who else,—what else the void within can fill ?
No one on earth, no one beneath the sky,
The sad disquiet of my heart can still,
Or bid the doubts and anxious tremors fly,
That life, its joys, and pleasures crush and kill.
Speak ! Keep not silence, or this heart must break,
Great Power unknown, upon me pity take !

Sometimes I think I see Thee in the light,
That gilds the green and flow'r enamelled plain,
Sometimes in star that gems the purple night,
Or in the rustling breeze, or gentle rain.
But say what means the mildew and the blight,
The drear volcano and the hurricane,
And death that turns the living to a clod?
What art Thou? Love or Anger? Speak, O God!

I heard a voice, came it from earth or heaven?
Was it the same that thrill'd the holy Seer
To whom the great Apocalypse was giv'n,
Of radiant worlds beyond this nether sphere,
And who in vision saw the Spirits Seven,
Like burning lamps of fire, intense and clear?
Silent I stood, spell-bound, o'ercome with awe,
And all sense lost in hearing, nothing saw.—

And thus it spake—it thrill'd thro' every chord—
“Though all creation vocal is of Me,
I am not fully known, or seen, or heard,
In stream or mountain, forest, lake, or sea;
But only in my self-revealing Word;
Of all my thoughts this only has the key,
Here if thou seek Me, thou shalt surely find
All that can fill the void in heart and mind.—

“ A Power that lit the stars that move in space,
And built the crystal spheres, and spread the sea,
A Mercy that clasps worlds in its embrace,
And draws the worst to worship at My knee ;
Immortal Love which, leaving its high place,
Bow'd down high heav'n unto the bitter tree,
Was born of woman, veiled itself in flesh,
That on the earth fair hope might wake afresh.

“ Not Mine the anguish of this weary earth,
The storm that wastes and ravages the plain,
The sorrows born with each man at his birth,
Death with its silence, mystery, and pain,
The curse of blight and barrenness and dearth,
'Gainst which men loudly cry, and cry in vain.
Patience ; believe My Son's most bitter rood
Will shape these evils to some perfect good ! ”

Rapt stood I as the voice so small and still,
Which woke sweet hopes, and memories wet with tears,
Died from the woods, the vales, the sloping hill,
Although an echo sang on in my ears,
That shook my pulses, made my heart to thrill—
And gone were all my tremulous doubts and fears.
The cry became a silence in my breast,
And where before was trouble now was rest.

WAS MAN MADE FOR NAUGHT?

SAVE me from this new Gospel of despair,
 Which tells us life is rounded by the grave
 That swallows up the good, the bright, the fair.
 Is Man, God's image, noble, true, and brave,
 To sink beneath oblivion's dreary wave?
 Is false the hope that gives to death its light,
 And naught before the soul but one long night?

What! Is our life but as a fragile lute,
 From which flows music in melodious stream,
 Until 'tis shatter'd and its tones are mute,
 Gone like an evanescent gleam,
 Or as the passing rapture of a dream
 Which vanishes at break of early dawn,
 When dews like opals glisten on the lawn?

Perish the thought! We fade not as the flower,
 That withers 'neath the ardours of the day,
 Nor are we children of a little hour,
 Who thoughtless sport among the grass in play:
 Whate'er "the fool" within his heart may say,
 There is a God, and 'neath His care we move,
 Into a land of endless light and love.

Death only hides away from human sight
Such secrets as 'tis given it to keep ;
The grave's dark gate is but a door to light,
And when we wake from the last earthly sleep
Eternal morn shall flash upon our sight,
And everlasting ages, as they roll,
With youth, immortal youth, renew the soul.

PRAYER.

PRAY always, child, nor ever faint or fail,
But let thy prayers ascend to God in heaven,
Pray when the morning rises grey and pale,
And when descend the purple shades of even.
Pray without ceasing ; God may make thee wait,
And keep thee at His door on bended knee,
But fear not He will leave thee desolate,
He may bless others first, but will bless thee.

WHEN I AM DEAD.

I.

DEAREST, when I am dead,
 Thy tears restrain,
 Say, why should one be shed,
 Let sorrow cease ;
 Soft is death's silent bed,
 It knows not care or pain,
 And I shall be at peace.

Why should you for me weep ?
 Is not God's gift
 To His beloved, sleep ?
 And is not rest
 Unbroken, calm, and deep,
 No weary eye to lift,
 For me the fittest, best ?

Dost thou not love me, dear ?
 I know 'tis true ;
 Then do not let a tear
 Drop on the sod,
 Nor on the pall or bier
 The cypress spread, or rue,
 Rejoice, I am with God.

ABOVE THE BIER.

II.

ABOVE the bier, I said,
 This is not death ;
 The rose is only shed,
 Like flow'rs at even ;
 Therefore be comforted,
 The soul will bloom in heav'n,
 Freed from its sheath.

It is not death, but life,
 Fuller, more true,
 To pass from care and strife,
 Sorrow and pain,
 Sharp as the bitter knife
 That draws the tears like rain,
 Where all is new.

My love for her,—its height
 How great, how broad,
 Thou canst not know, till light
 On darkness shine ;
 Its scale is infinite,
 None can its depths divine,
 No ! none but God.

OUR DEAD.

WEARY they were, and sigh'd for rest,
Tired of the world once sought with zest,
Knowing to be with Christ is best.

They lie beneath the granite stone,
Each in his quiet grave alone,
Or laid in peace beside their own.

Naught can disturb their dreamless sleep,
Nor ever shall their closed eyes weep,
They sow'd in tears, in joy shall reap.

God loved our loved, so with Him bore
Our own unto the farther shore,
Where they are ours for evermore.

NIGHT.

THE night was full of stars, I stood beside the sea,
 A low wind stirr'd the waves whose voices came
 to me

Like music from a world beyond the ken of eye,
 While the hills that rose in majesty around,
 Spake clearly, with a deep and passionate sound ;
 So spake the purple silence, and the glories of the sky,
 Till a calmness as of heav'n, falling on my soul,
 The trouble at my heart was quieted and still'd,
 And a peace akin to rapture o'er me stole ;
 I was silent 'neath the spell, but my happy spirit thrill'd.

THE PROPHET'S WAIL.

“WHO HATH BELIEVED OUR REPORT?”

OH, give me not the Prophet's voice,
 Oh, save me from the open'd eye,
 Let others in the gift rejoice,
 And pass me, God, oh, pass me by ;

I would not see beyond the hour.

Let coming days be wrapp'd in gloom,
Give others if they will, the power,
But let not mine be such a doom.

'Tis but a curse the truth to know,
And have no spell to turn the fate
Seen coming with its weight of woe,
While I in impotence must wait ;
No ! blind me—let the present day
Hedge me about, and close mine eyes,
And from the future let no ray
Flash on my sight to make me wise.

There burns a fire before mine eyes,
And sounds of wrath ring in mine ears,
Dread visions oft before me rise,
That scorch my cheeks with scalding tears :
Let others speak, they may be heard,
Before their words the guilty quail,
The trembling conscience may be stirr'd,
And many a harden'd face grow pale.

For all men mock when I forewarn,
My dark forebodings they deride,
They laugh my prophet-wail to scorn
And lightly put my words aside ;

'Tis anguish that I have no power
To change the doom I see must fall,
The storms will burst, that o'er men lower,
In vain for pity's sake I call.

None will believe my solemn word,
None from my lips receive the truth,
It is as though they had not heard,
They have no wisdom, grace, or ruth ;
Oh, do not then my mind illume,
The Seer's vision brings but pain,
Thy gift, O God, at once resume,
And give me back the darken'd brain.

REFLECTIONS.

I.

I STOOD beside a sheltered, tranquil lake,
 When earth wore all the holy hush and calm
 That in a temple follow prayer and psalm.
 Nature kept Sabbath : not a breath did shake
 A leaf, or branch, or dew-drop in the brake,
 And as I gazed into the waters sweet,
 All heaven seemed lying at my very feet.
 And winds were still and every air was balm—

Far in the depths, translucent, pure and clear,
 Unruffled even by a ripple's flow,
 Were glassed the stars that in the azure sphere
 With silver fires made all the skies aglow.
 And yearned I then that, as within that mere,
 High heaven were mirror'd in my heart below.

II.

I WOULD that heaven *were* mirror'd in my heart,
 Distinct, defined, as in this tranquil lake,
 Which each reflection is so quick to take
 That here it sleeps, the sky's true counterpart,
 With not a cloudlet passing it athwart.
 See, in its depths a thousand glories shine,
 Flooded and fulgent with a light divine.
 Ah, would that I were only as thou art,

Thou mirror, radiant with celestial sheen !
 Thou glass, to image forth that world on high
 Which o'er me in its tender grace doth lean,
 Clad in a fair and stainless purity !
 O God, that heaven in me were clearly seen,
 As yonder stars within this wave serene !

THE LAKE COUNTRY.

I.

A LAND of wondrous beauty, where each scene
 Reveals fresh grandeur and some novel grace ;
 Where glory clothes from sunny top to base
 The hills which spring from lakes and meadows green ;
 Where tarns, blue as the skies which o'er them lean,
 Lie cradled in the mountains' fond embrace,
 Whose majesty is mirror'd in their face.
 Lovely at all times and whenever seen,

Either when rain comes ~~rushing~~ from the rifted cloud ;
 Or shrieks the storm like some lost soul in pain ;
 Or roaring thunder wakes the echoes loud.
 Most beautiful when valleys smile again,
 And landscapes rising from their misty shroud,
 The golden sunlight glorifies the plain.

II.

NO spot without its beauty, far or near ;
 Green glen and glade, huge scaur, and wood-
 clothed hill,

Fair field and fell, and silver mountain-rill,
 And lakes where lilies, flowering all the mere,
 Glass their white loveliness in waters clear
 That sleep beneath them, pure and cool and still.

Here have I drunk of beauty to my fill.
 As friends who better known become more dear,

So with thy charms. When life draws near the end,
 Ye shall be with me, hills and valleys green ;
 And dying eyes from dying bed shall send
 A yearning look to each remembered scene,
 Fresh in my heart as though beheld yestreen ;
 And thoughts of you with thoughts of heaven shall blend.

A LEGEND OF ST. PETER.

IN days of persecution fierce and dread,
 When all who Christ as very God adored
 Were thrown to lions, slain with fire and sword,
 The timid Peter from Rome's city fled,
 Whose guilty streets with blood of saints were red.
 When on the Appian Way he met his Lord,
 Whose face betray'd a heart with sorrow stirr'd,
 And whose pathetic eyes held tears unshed.

"Lord, whither goest Thou?" the Apostle cried,
 "What wounds are those which in Thy hands I see?"
 "To Calvary I haste where once I died,
 For thee to die again upon the tree,"
 Then Peter, conscience-stricken for his sin,
 Turned back to Rome a martyr's crown to win.

CHORALE.

A WAKE ! and let the high-raised choral song
 In loud triumphal cadence float along,
 Until its harmonies around us blend,
 And to the heav'ns melodious strains ascend.

Praise in no vague, or low, uncertain tone,
 His love who sits upon the sapphire throne,
 But in uplifted voice His grace declare,
 While swells our music on the vocal air.

The trumpet blow, and strike the tuneful lyre,
 With spirit all aglow with sacred fire,
 So shall our psalms and anthems sweet and clear,
 In holy concert reach His well-pleas'd ear.

O God of light, in whom we live,
 Look down from heav'n above,
 As grateful praise to Thee we give,
 And celebrate Thy love.

Fain would we catch the music sweet
Of golden harps on high,
Fain would we learn the measures meet
Of angels in the sky.

We cannot praise Thee as the quire
Of those who see Thy face,
As Seraphim with hearts of fire,
Yet would we sing Thy grace.

Let Hymn and Psalm and Anthem peal aloud,
And rise to God a fragrant incense cloud,
Low at His feet in rapture we adore,
In songs to be renewed for evermore.

His praise let cymbals clash with silver chime,
Wed to the organ's bass in measured time,
His praise with hallelujahs loudly sing,
Who through the ages reigns eternal King.

Sing, sing with us ye high angelic quire
Whose lips are touched with hallow'd altar fire,
Ye heav'ns and earth join in one sacred song,
And all creation the glad theme prolong.

“A WORLD OUT OF COURSE.”

AH, ye who fain would build a heav'n below,
 And ante-date that fair Millennial Morn,
 Which is to seal the source whence sorrows flow,
 And strip the roses of their piercing thorn,
 Think you to purify the weary years,
 Watered so long with blood, and wet with tears?

Perfect your social systems, if you can,
 Let governments be just, give equal rights,
 And knit as loving Brothers, man to man,
 Throne sacred Freedom on her ancient heights,
 Enrich the poor, and smite all selfish wealth,
 Let Science by wise laws secure our health.

Do all you may, still will there pass a light
 From earth which never can return again,
 No flower shall seem as fair, no sun as bright,
 As when unsounded were the depths of pain,
 And still unknown that passion of deep grief,
 To which no human aid can bring relief.

Sad severances still will break the heart,
Not always springing from the open grave,
Rather from sundered love,—souls torn apart,—
For which no healing balm, no Lethe's wave,
Nor for sick chambers where the stricken lie,
On beds of long protracted agony.

Here tenderesses of the dearest friend,
His love, his assiduity, and care,
Cannot prevent the wish that all may end,
And bring the sole sweet solace of despair ;—
That death, best, kindest friend of all, will come,
And loose the silver cord, and take us home.

And what of empty chair, and vacant place
The form of loved one never more will fill,
Whose dear voice silenced, and whose vanished face
Move us to grief no anodyne can still,
Fence as you may your home, love cannot close
The door 'gainst Death, most pitiless of foes.

While love remains, what love was from the first,
The most imperious passion man can feel,
While death the surest of all ills, and worst,
Tramples all human hopes beneath his heel,
Alas ! earth's truest music still will be
Set to the sadness of the minor key.

A CHRISTMAS LYRIC.

“**W**HAT of the night?” O Watchman, we would
know ;

How long is darkness on the world to lie ?
When will the dim and dreary shadows go,
And gleams of dawn flush all the radiant sky ?

The night is long and dreary,—cold,—so cold,
With leaden feet the slow hours creep away,
Storm-voices sweep athwart the weald and wold,
And not a purple line predicts the day.

On the first Christmas morning fair and calm,
From open'd heavens came a song of peace,
But sounds of strife seem to belie that psalm,
And cries of bitter anguish never cease.

Tears wet the eyes of sad and suffering men,
Earth fill'd with graves sounds hollow to the tread ;
The King of Terrors holds his ancient reign,
And from unwilling arms he wrests our dead.

“What of the night, O Watchman?” the long night,
In which we stand disconsolate and forlorn?
Will never dawn the day upon our sight?
Will never come the golden light of Morn?

“Lift up your eyes,” the Watchman smiling said,
“And look unto the Eastern hills afar,
The Dawn already smites their lofty head,
And o’er them soon will rise the Morning Star.

“Then will the shadows flee, the day will break,
And sunlight flash o’er all the world abroad,
Songs fill the silence, tuneful Birds awake,
And from Earth’s altars, incense rise to God.

“The skies shall open as they did before,
Upon that first and holy Christmas morn,
When Angels standing at the golden Door,
Sang ‘Glory! Glory!’ to the Newly-Born.

“And Christ shall leave His sapphire throne above,
And once again yon azure veil shall rend,
And downward borne on rapid wings of Love
’Midst songs of Saints and Seraphs shall descend.

“When He appears, the world’s true Life and Light,
Then shall all death and darkness flee away,
And Earth emerging from the shades of night
Rejoice for evermore in cloudless Day.”

HARVEST.

SWEET is the breath of the early morn,
 And sweet the lark in the sky,
 The songs of reapers are heard in the corn,
 'Mongst oats and the bearded rye,
 Where sickles flash, and sheaves fall fast,
 And the ripened grain is gathered at last,
 And they joy in the Harvest home,
 They joy in the Harvest home.

The dews that fell on the August night,
 Still shimmer on bough and bud,
 And shining bright in the amber light,
 Turn to diamonds the leaves of the wood,
 And the skies are glass'd in the water clear,
 In placid river, and gleaming mere,
 Oh, well for the Harvest home,
 Oh, well for the Harvest home.

The little hills laugh on every side,
The valleys with gladness sing,
All Nature is clad like a queenly bride,
Who robes for her coming king,
Oh, raise the anthem and sing His praise,
Who crowns the year with these Autumn days
And gives us the Harvest home,
And gives us the Harvest home.

MORNING.

RING out ye bonny Bells of blue,
Greet with your chimes the morning bright,
Shake from your cups the glistening dew
Wept in calm spaces of the night.

The Birds have waken'd from their sleep
By murmuring winds the leaves are stirr'd,
And plaintive bleatings of the sheep
From field to fold are softly heard.

The Glow-worm now has quench'd the lamp
That 'midst the grass burn'd like a star,
Marsh-fires no more gleam in the swamp,
To lure the traveller from afar.

The night has gone, the world's awake,
To life, to beauty, and to love,
The thrush is heard in bush and break,
And in the elms the coo of dove.

Pale shadows flit along the wheat,
O'er moor and mountain gently pass,
While here about my very feet,
Upsprings the cool and fragrant grass.

The fields grow lovely in the light,
Fann'd by the breath of kindling morn,
The sun that rises in his might
Greets with his beams a world new-born.

O happy earth ! O days and nights,
O sunsets, clouds, and golden dawn,
O purple vales, O mountain heights,
O dews upon the glimmering lawn !

O happy earth ! More happy soul,
Whose empire is this sphere divine,
What bliss to hear its music roll,
What joy to see its glories shine !

“A TRUE WOMAN.”

GOOD Sir, your vows but weary me,—no more—
 I prithee take them to some other door,
 And pass this poor one by,
 Nor need you, Sir,—the boast's your own—despair,
 For there are many ladies, Sir, more fair,
 Who languish for your sigh.

The town says you have often sworn to love,
 Your vows but cunning springes subtly wove,
 To catch unwary hearts,
 'Tis thus you fill in sport an empty day,
 And pass some idle moments,—think it play,—
 And triumph in your arts.

You take in vain—as some men God's—love's name,
 Debase and put it to an open shame,
 And tread it in the dust.
 Love that should stainless be as heav'n and pure,
 You turn into a fit and proper lure
 To slay a woman's trust.

You boast, too, of your triumphs before men,
Your conquests over Kate, and May, and Gwen,
 The last almost a child ;
So innocent, so young, so guileless, fair,
Who never knew a mother's tender care,
 She also was beguiled.

And now you come to try your arts on me,
A humble suitor—bend the facile knee,
 And worship at my shrine.
You think I, too, will fall an easy prey,
And, Sir, you dared to name me yesterday
 Lightly across the wine.

They call you "Lady Killer," as you know,
You come, you see, you conquer, and you go,
 Without one passing sigh.
A butterfly, you rifle each sweet flower,
And having spent with each a honey'd hour,
 Leave them to pine and die.

O brave ! O brave ! your manhood's strength to use
Against our weakness, thinking we must lose
 In such unequal game ;
You laugh, you jest, to see how frail we are,
And judge us all before one common bar,
 Deeming us all the same.

You know us not—we are not the weak things
You take us for, poor moths that singe their wings
At ev'ry taper's flame,
We women, Sir, are noble, pure, and true,
Worthy men's honour, and their reverence due,
And those from them we claim.

If my voice falters, 'tis from my disdain,
I shame to weep, although I feel the pain,
Down to the heart's red core.
Traitor to love, my deepest scorn is stirr'd,
There lies your way. No, not another word—
Peace, peace—*there* is the door,

THE TWILIGHT.

THERE lieth a silence on all the house,
A stillness as of the tomb :
Nothing is stirring—not even a mouse,
In the wainscoting of the room.
Naught is heard but the rain
'Gainst the window-pane,
Like the sigh of a soul not cleansed from its stain.

And here as I sit by the light of the fire,
Far into the night alone,
Watching the flame as in many a spire
It curls from the old hearth-stone,
Memories come and they go,—
Now they ebb,—now they flow,
Borne in waves from the shores of the long-ago.

And many a face of the dead and dear
Looks across from that distant shore,
And many a voice is heard in mine ear,
Now silent for evermore.
And I dream by the blaze
Of the far, sweet days,
Which pass in their glory before my gaze.

The fair golden times are with me again,
When I roamed the fields a boy ;
When I sang to the echoes that answered the strain
With notes of a mocking joy :
Days of brightness they were,
Not a cloud or a care,
A May-time with blossom and beauty fair.

The hedges once more with the thorn are white
And the breezes about me play ;
The green meadow-grass with the dew is bright
And scents are blown from the hay :

While the clear little stream,
With a flash and a gleam,
Sounds sweet as some melody heard through a dream.

I wander again 'neath the beechen shade,
Where the sunbeams glint and glide,
And out to the pleasant and open glade
With daisies and buttercups pied :
And the blue pigeons coo,
As they used to do,
While a mate for their nest they tenderly woo.

And as loved ones return with the olden charms
From the silent and ghostly land,
I reach forth my longing and empty arms,
To the places whereon they stand :
For they come in the light
Of the embers bright,
To talk in low tones through the shadows of night.

Thus I muse and I dream by the fire alone,
Through the hours to the morning grey ;
And I feel that the light from my life has gone,
And its colour pass'd from the day :
But anon, I grow calm,
Hope sheddeth her balm,
And God in the night gives a song and a psalm.

Though the present be dark, I know that the dawn
Will break, with its beauty and bloom,
That soon I shall hear from the dewy lawn
The songs of birds in my room :
And my heart will sing too,
With a music as true,
As when smiles were many and tears were few.

I think :—God is Love : He takes, but He lives
To repair any loss He hath sent ;
As in nature, His hand ever tenderly gives
The green lichen to cover the rent :
Spring cometh again,
With its sun and its rain,
And summer with flowers to gladden the plain.

LOVE'S QUESTIONINGS.

WHEN dead they carry me beyond the door,
And you sit lonely in our pleasant room,
Will thoughts of days that can return no more,
Rise up like ghosts that come back from the tomb ?

Will tendernesses of the olden time,
That lent a sweetness to the vanished hours,
Which, as they passed, struck each with silver chime,
Be borne to you like scent of withered flowers ?

O Love ! will you remember that dear hour,
The day when first I called you all my own,
When blossomed all my heart in sudden flower,
And hope full-statured at a bound had grown ?

Then spring was in its fresh and April grace,
Its odours borne to us in breezes soft ;
Beauty and bloom were brightening every place,
The little lambs were bleating in the croft.

That spring ! Its sweetness comes across me now,
I see the dewy fields that round us lay,
I feel its coolness on my fevered brow ;
Ah, earth was nearer heaven that happy day !

Do you remember it ? and will it be
A thought to comfort you when I am gone,
When I myself am but a memory,
And you sit musing at our hearth alone ?

And what of after years when life grew sweet,
When love robbed grief of more than half its pain,
And days passed rapidly on flying feet,—
Will there be yearnings they could come again ?

Oh, will you sicken for the dear old days,
 So happy, though they had some grief and care ?
And will your glass reflect a weary face,
 Pale with the passion of a sad despair ?

For those were days, beloved, when e'en our sighs
 Were often born of happiness, not pain ;
And life was like the blue and summer skies,
 Where, if a cloud appeared, it passed again.

So, will your heart ache as you sit and dream
 Fondly of me, now in the silent land,
Whence looking wistfully across the stream,
 I long to welcome you to where I stand ?

If able, I will come unto the place
 Where I sat with you, in the days gone by ;
And, as I look unseen into your face,
 You'll feel, by love's true instinct, I am nigh.

So do not weep, beloved, when I am gone ;
 Why should there fall for me one fruitless tear ?
In life, or death, you still are all my own ;
 What matter, then, if I be there or here ?

CONFESSION.

WHAT, will he never, never come?
I sent to him an hour ago.
I cannot bear the madd'ning strain,
The fires within me that consume,
The torture, agony, and pain,
The horror of the coming tomb.
These old men are so slow—so slow!
The day is wearing on to eve,
—The last that I shall ever see—
He would not mock me or deceive.
If I could break these prison bars,
Through which I hardly see the stars,
To him all quickly would I flee,
And pour into his awe-struck ear
My tale of sin, and lay all bare
My heart, my soul, its shame and fear;
These, these before my conscience glare,
And drive and goad me to despair.

I long denied and cloaked it all,
 My heart was hard as this cold stone
 'Gainst which I press my aching breast
 To still its throbbings into rest.
 I did not even make a moan,
 Nor sob, not utter any cry,
 Not when I found myself alone ;
 No, not a tear was in my eye,
 Although I saw her bleeding fall,
 And felt and knew that she would die.
 But now I am no longer brave ;
 My heart is filled with bitter dread ;
 I know they've dug for me a grave—
 I long my soul to purge and save ;
 To-morrow sees me with the dead.

But hark ! Ah, surely this is he
 Who comes to shrive my guilty soul.
 I hear the key turn in the door ;
 How shall I tell my bitter dole,
 Lay bare my crime, reveal my woe ?
 Yet all shall be confessed by me.
 I hear his step upon the floor—
 Father ! father ! thou art come !
 I will no more, no more be dumb,
 Thou shalt know all, all, all.
 Yes ; I am guilty ! do not shrink,
 Oh ! do not turn away thy face ;
 Have mercy, father ; show some grace—

I stand upon the icy brink
Of death ; I know my fate, my doom—
The rack, the torture ! Save me, save !
If that thou canst. I do repent.
Oh ! must I leave the prison's gloom
To meet the headsman's cruel eye !
Beneath his glittering axe to die,
Then thrown into the loathsome grave !
Is there no hope they will relent ?
Father, I turn to you with tears ;
I am so young—my mother dead—
No one to care for me or lead ;
A child, a foolish child in years.
Listen again. I see your eyes
Are yearning towards me. Ah, you feel
For me. I hear your sighs ;
Your heart is human—'tis not steel ;
It is not death I so much dread,
If there were rest when I am dead.
Ah, to lay down my head to sleep
On earth's calm breast—no more to weep,
Or waken to another morn
To face man's cruel hate and scorn !
Ah, this were bliss, this were most sweet !
But oh, to think that I must meet
The Judge upon the Judgment Seat !
I dread His wrath—I fear His ire—
The deathless worm—the quenchless fire ;

Save me from these, the curse, the ban,
Save me, dear Father, if you can !

Yes, I will tell you all.—Bend down
Your ear, and do not shrink or start ;
Take pity on me ; do not frown,
As I lay bare to thee my heart.
Young Giuglio,—I remember not
The time when we were not as one.
Our homes were near, among the vines—
To grow together was our lot.
We played as children in the sun,
We worked together in the shade,
We sat together 'neath the pines,
We knelt together, and we prayed ;
And in San Joseph's solemn aisle,
Heard what the holy father said,
When speaking of the joys of heaven,
How men repent and are forgiven.
We loved, loved truly, without guile.
I hardly knew a mother's love—
I was an infant when she died,
And she was taken up above
To rest with God in Paradise,
Far from my wistful heart and eyes,
And from my weeping father's side.
For me, I was left near alone,
And did what pleased me,—worked or played,
Wandered by valley, stream, and glade,

And so grew up. Some called me fair,
And praised the lustre of my hair.
I cared not for their praise or blame,
One only did I seek to please—
Others to me were all the same ;
But Giuglio, oh my love, my life !
My Morning-Star, my joy, my light !
Sweet as the breezes of the May ;
He was to make me his own wife—
To keep me ever in his sight,
And be mine own strong staff and stay.
And so for me the earth grew bright,
More sweet the day ; more fair the night.
The world was like a Paradise,
From which there rose a happy hymn,
And angels from the heavens looked down
With kind and sympathizing eyes.
There I was seated on a throne,
And queen-like reigned in bliss alone,
Crowned with my Giuglio's happy love,
A crown to me all crowns above.
I must not linger on the joy,—
The bliss was brief. A serpent crept
Into my garden,—brought a curse,
It wore a woman's face,—was fair,
Had fatal beauty to destroy ;
Black browed, with eyes of subtle flame,
And glorious clouds of tawny hair

With meshes to ensnare the soul.
 She had a cold and cruel smile,
 False, false, and fitted to beguile.
 She caught my Giuglio in her snare.

His love from me she stole,
 And made him her poor foolish slave,
 Drawing him surely by her art.
 The world for me became a grave,
 Wherein lay buried my dead heart,
 And over which she lightly trod.
 She triumphed when she saw me sad—
 I was to her but as the sod
 On which she placed her dainty feet.
 Her scorn, her laughter, made me mad.
 The sunshine left my darkened life,
 'Twas all o'ershadowed with a cloud.
 I withered 'neath the inward strife ;
 I longed to wear the deathly shroud,
 That all the passion and the fever
 Might pass, for ever and for ever,
 And I low in the ground, at rest,
 The green grass waving o'er my breast.
 Oh, to have died there at his feet !
 That would have been most sweet, most sweet.
 But death was not so to be won—
 I was to live, live sadly on,
 When all that made life dear was gone.
 The days passed by, I know not how

I could not say if summer shone,
Or winter came with chilling snow—
My heart was dead, and still, and cold—
My face grew pinched, and grey, and wan—
And youth was o'er, and I was old.

One evening late I walked alone,
My heart hard, lifeless as a stone ;
And through the garden passed, and by
The thick-leaved vines, and through the flowers
Which scented all the dusky air,
I paused a moment with a sigh—
All was so sweet and fragrant there.—
Father, I think I smell them now,
Jasmine, and rose, and lily fair.
Then heard I voices,—saw two pace
The twilight alleys, up and down.
Love looked from out his up-turned face,
And set upon her head a crown.
He drew her dainty hand in his,
She leaned against him all her weight,
He stooped and gave her one long kiss—
And I was forced to see their bliss.
I, that stood there so desolate,
I heard her laugh a silver laugh,
It pierced me like a sharpened sword,
It ran like fire through all my blood,
It maddened me as there I stood,
A devil it within me stirred—

It was too sweet, too sweet by half,
I look'd on,—stricken, wounded, slain,
With tortured heart and whirling brain.

Father, wouldst know what then took place?
They walked together to the door,
I followed through the dusky gloom,
Drawn by a fatal secret force
That held and pressed me more and more,
And drew me onward to my doom.
With heart aflame and ghastly face,
I saw them part with fond embrace,
And then he left her. She went in—
I glided swiftly after her.
She turned ; she saw me where I stood ;
She smiled the smile of those who sin.
I for a moment did not stir,
And then in wild and wrathful mood
I spoke ; she answered,—laughed ; and then
I felt the dagger 'neath my breast ;
Held it a moment tightly pressed ;
And as I heard the laugh again
That stung me with a sudden pain,
I raised my hand,—there shrilled a cry,
Upon her dress I saw a stain ;
'Twas blood, red blood ; I knew the why—
The dagger ! Yes, close to my heart,
Hidden beneath my dress it lay ;
But why I kept it closely there,

I hardly know, nor can I say.
Perhaps that it might give me rest,
And save me from my dark despair.
Father, I think that I was mad—
I left the house ; I did not care
What next befell. Why should I flee,
For what was left of life to me ?
'Tis all confused what happened then ;
A crowd of faces ; startling cries ;
Women aghast and wondering men ;
My father, horror in his eyes,
Their lids all red with unshed tears ;
And Giuglio with a face like stone,
White, as the dead, with such a look
Of woe, as though had passed whole years
And left him old. His whole frame shook
And trembled like the aspen leaf,
And in his eyes, as in a book,
I read my guilt. And then a swoon
Brought for a season sweet relief.
Oh, never to have waked again !
That in death's arms I might have lain !
The waking came too soon, too soon,
I woke, and found me here. The rest
You know. Father, I am to die—
To-morrow ? Is it then so near ?
Only a summer night between
Me and the bitter doom I fear ?

A few more hours,—what shall have been?
 Can it indeed be then so soon?
 Shall I not see again that moon
 Which shineth brightly through these bars,
 Nor look upon those happy stars,
 Nor move amongst the fragrant flowers,
 Nor train again the trellised vine?
 No! I can reckon up the hours
 Before they take this life of mine.
 Well, let that go. My sin! my sin!
 Can I for this forgiveness win?
 Say, is there hope for me—and where?
 Tell me some refuge from despair.
 For oh, to die with this poor hand
 All red with blood! and then to go
 And meet with God, where *she* will be
 To charge the guilty deed on me!
 For then together we shall stand,
 And on my brow will burn the brand
 Of murder! Oh, the woe, the woe,
 The deathless worm, the quenchless flame,
 The horror, agony, and shame!
 Have pity, Father, save, oh save!
 Let me not fill a hopeless grave!
 “Mary!” the Virgin Mother mild,
 The gentle, good, and undefiled,
 What, what,—oh, tell me what of her?
 She is too pure, too far above

A wicked, cruel thing like me ;
I am not worthy of her love,
Or tenderness—No, let that be—
For if I prayed she would not hear ;
No cry of mine her heart would move ;
She standeth on the glassy sea,
And songs of angels, sweet and clear,
Fill with their harmonies her ear.
What knows she of the maddened mind,
The tortured heart, the burning brain,
The deep remorse, the gnawing pain,
The fears that all my senses bind,
The horror more than I can tell,
The dread that scorches like a hell ?
Speak not of *her*. Tell me of one,
If such there be, who will not scorn
A sinner guilty, lost, undone,
Outcast from all, helpless, forlorn ;
Who will both pity and show grace.
Tell me of such, Father, I pray,
Nay, look not with that hopeless face,
The hours are speeding fast away ;
To me is left but little space
Before the breaking of the day.
And at the dawn—you know the rest—
Ah, lives no pity in your breast ?
That Crucifix—you hold it there
Between me and my dark despair,

Truly I trusted to it once ;
 It was enough,—that sculptured bronze,
 But now,—nay, Father,—do not start,
 I need a living, loving heart,
 The Man, the holy preaching Friar,
 Did tell us of,—the world's desire—
 That Man divine,—that God in man,
 Oh, speak of Him, who on the cross
 Bore shame and mockery and loss,
 And all, and more than nature can ;
 Bore it for sinners on the rood—
 Ah, He was merciful and good !
 I would have nothing pass between
 Me and the Christ on whom I lean.
 Oh, it were wondrous strange and sweet
 To fall like her of old, love-led,
 Down at His own dear blessed feet,
 And wash them with the tears I shed,
 And weep, and weep, till I were dead.
 He would not spurn me from the place,
 For He was ever full of grace,
 And loving, pitiful, and kind.
 The lost He came to seek and find ;
 The broken heart to heal and bind.
 Have mercy, Jesu ; here I lie ;
 Low from the dust to Thee I cry ;
 No one so lost, undone, as I.
 Oh, by Thy five red bleeding wounds,

And by the scars on hands and side,
By shudd'ring wail, and awful sounds,
That pierced the skies from Calvary,
And by the flowing, crimson tide,
Oh, save me, Jesu, or I die !

Hark ! Hark ! Didst thou not hear them toll
The great and solemn funeral bell ?
'Twas for the passing of my soul
That loudly rang that dismal knell.
Now shrive me—speak the words of peace—
—'Tis well. The time is drawing near,
The headsman, he will soon be here—
I hear his steps. Well, let him come ;
I am prepared to meet my doom—
Nor think, good Father, I would live ;
I shrink no longer from the tomb,
Dark though it be, and full of gloom.
But Giuglio !—pray him to forgive ;
And say that I still thought of him,
E'en 'neath the headsman's axe so keen,
And loved him. Say all this from me,
And more,—I hope to meet him, where
In the now near eternity
There is no sin, and no despair.
One moment—kneel with me in prayer—
Now, Father,—let us go.

LONGFELLOW.¹

IN MEMORIAM.

MOURNED by two nations, as is meet,
He lieth dead—the Singer sweet.

Our thoughts turn towards his honoured grave,
Beyond the broad Atlantic wave.

Alas! that even *he* must fall
'Neath the same dart that strikes us all.

Could not grim Death pass by our dead?
Lay low some less-beloved head?

His silent lips will nevermore
Charm us, as in the days of yore;

Nor ever shall that voice again
Delight us with its flute-like strain.

¹ Died on the 24th of March, 1882.

How well he played the Poet's part
And dignified his noble art !

His life was like a perfect psalm,
Majestic, beautiful, and calm.

The calmness came to him through pain,
Which gave the sweetness to his strain.

For he had suffered—known the grief
Too great for all but God's relief.

The Singer's song became divine
When Sorrow made his heart her shrine.

Nature he loved in every mood ;
He was her child, and understood

The meanings of her changing forms,
Her clouds, her sunshine, and her storms.

He sang the beauty of the hills ;
The music of the tuneful rills

Ran in his verse, where the low breeze
Murmured amongst the leafy trees.

Sweet songs of flowers to him were giv'n,
And stars that keep their watch in heav'n,

And odours blown from forests deep,
And dews that on the meadows sleep;

The rain, and storm, and drifts of snow,
That round the Indian Wigwams blow.

The rush of stream, the roar of fall,
The thunder crash,—he sang them all.

“Voices” came to him “of the Night,”
Visions of “angels” bless’d his sight.

“The sea kept secrets” for his ear,
Its hidden depths to him were clear.

We think of him—so good, so true!
And tender tears our eyes bedew.

We miss him sorely from earth’s quire;
We weep to see his unstrung lyre.

No more he’ll sing upon this earth
Of Love, of Bridal, Death, or Birth.

Alas! we wish—but all in vain—
“Hyperion” were with us again.

“The children” by the evening fire
Yearn for him with a vague desire.

He loved them well : had sung their fears,
Their hopes, their pleasures, and their tears.

Yea, all who tender memories own,
Mourn for their peerless Minstrel gone.

But though he sings on earth no more,
His voice is heard on that far shore,

Where, on the Sea of Glass and Fire,
He stands among God's sweet-voiced quire.

There never minor mars the song
That floats the crystal spheres along.

If ours the loss, if ours the pain,
His, surely, is the bliss,—the gain.

And fragrant as the breath of flowers,
He leaves a memory which is ours.

WAITING.

SADLY she sat in her trellised bower,
 At the close of a sultry summer's day,
 When the dew lay fresh in the heart of the flower,
 And the shadows of eve fell cool and grey.

She pressed her hand on her weary brow
 As she looked beyond to the distant hill,
 While a nightingale sang on an elm-tree bough,
 And poured out his love to his mate at will.

Voices came up from the garden walk,
 With the odour of roses sweet and warm,
 And clear rose the sound of their loving talk,
 As the wife leaned close on her husband's arm.

There was ripple of laughter and light-wing'd jest,
 All part of a life bright, happy, and free,—
 "How long," she said, "shall I wait for the rest
 That his presence will bring with it over the sea?"

She heard the young children sing at their play,
And the sounds came thrilling along the air,
“Ah me!” she exclaimed, “ah, well-a-day!
My sorrow is greater than I can bear!

“He promised to come ere the old year was out;—
Now the summer will soon be over and gone;
Though my heart is breaking, I will not doubt:
’Twere a death in life not still to hope on.

“And well I remember his parting word:
’Tis his wife’s to cherish until she die;
It shook my soul till its pulses stirred,—
So sweet—and so bitter—that last ‘good-bye!’

“How long—how long must I wait and pray
Till God send him back to gladden my sight?
How long must I watch for his step through the day,
And wait for his knock through the dreary night?”

And he—he lay drowned on the ocean-bed,—
Lay down ’mongst the weeds in the deep-blue main;
And never till seas render up their dead
Shall she see him or hear his dear voice again.

And so, when the summer was all aflame,
Like a bird that can only pipe one song,
Whose note is ever and always the same,
She wept and she moaned, “How long? how long?”

THE SUMMERS OF THE LONG AGO.

“I sleep, but my heart waketh.”

WHEN silence falls upon the solemn night,
 And all in house and street is hushed and still,
 Bright visions rise before my happy sight,
 And come and go at will ;
 And days long fled,
 Ghosts of the past, come to me from the dead.

And friends I see in dreams, as fair and sweet
 As were the summers of the long ago,
 When in the golden days we used to meet
 And talk in voices low,
 And often stand
 Within the sphere of an enchanted land.

Awake, I die ; in dreams, I live again,
 For then return the joys were mine of old ;
 Ere hope had died, or love had grown to pain,
 And left me sad and cold ;
 When all the hours
 Were scented with the fragrant breath of flowers.

So when the waking comes, it comes too soon,
For with it pass my bright and happy dreams ;
My sun sinks suddenly ; goes down at noon ;
Leaving behind no gleams ;
Gone is my spring,
And life once more becomes a wintry thing.

So would I dream, and wake, and dream again—
O love ! O hope ! come back a little while.
What though the wak'ning must be full of pain ?
In blissful sleep I smile—
Come vanished years,
Let me dream still, although I wake to tears !

AN ARTIST.

IN A SCULPTOR'S STUDIO.

Artist.

FRIEND, there you have my very heart,
Embodied thought of inmost soul :
That marble is of life a part,
Of many a hope the yearned-for goal.
Oh, bitter sweet,—oh, sweet the hours
I've spent upon it night and day !
Summers have come with breath of flowers,
And waned and withered, passed away,

Followed by winters cold and keen,—
They found me in my studio still,
And saw me o'er the marble lean
Until the deep and inward thought
Took form according to my will ;
Then as from hour to hour I wrought,
The stone the mind's reflection caught.

The mother, when she clasps her child,
Forgets her travail and her pain,
In that sweet infant undefiled ;
Would go through all, and more again,
Such treasure to her heart to strain.
It was her thought for many an hour,
Her dream by night, her hope for days ;
And now the bud has bloomed to flower,
Her heart o'erruns with bliss and praise.
And still her wonder grows and grows
To see, what but in dreams she saw,
Laid on her breast, a budding rose,
And feel it, with a kind of awe,
From her warm bosom nurture draw.
Yes,—there it lies,—this makes her bliss,—
The hope of brooding months is here ;
And now she gives it kiss on kiss,
To take from rapture all its fear.

*My sculptured thought—behold it there !
Of night the dream,—of day the prayer—*

To me,—oh, more than I can say ;
 What think'st thou of it, Friend, I pray ?

Friend.

A noble work, perfect in form :
 Here one may see a poet's heart.
 With life's great joy it seemeth warm,
 And almost breathes through lips that part.
 It fully satisfies the mind :
 'Twere less than praise to call it good,—
 Graceful the pose, and well design'd,
 'Twas wrought in your most happy mood.

Artist.

Memory is there, dear Friend, and love ;
 They sat beside me while I wrought,
 And each their tender fancies wove
 Until its life the marble caught.

You know the face,—my love, my life,—
 Oh, she was all the world to me,—
 She made my world,—had been my wife,
 But Death said that was not to be.
 My friends say, “ Let the public see,
 And break the silence round with praise.
 Let recognition come to me
 Bright as the light of summer days,
 Which fills with warmth, expands the heart,
 And beautifies the earth and sky

With glory from themselves apart,
As bathed within its gleams they lie."
But what to me is empty fame?
I would remain obscure, unknown :
It were no joy to have my name
Through every land and island blown.

Friend.

I am no artist, as you know,
But could my hand work out as thine,
And carve in stainless marble so,—
Could I flash out some thought divine,
And make the senseless canvas glow,
Compelling men to hold my name
In honour,—could my perfect art
Win reverence, and love, and fame,
Accorded freely from the heart,
No sweetness could be half so dear.
Then, as I passed through crowded street
All watching till I drew anear,
Regardless of the cold or heat,
If they might only catch my eye,—
Would jewelled caps in honour raise,
As with a smile I passed them by,—
Glad just to bask within its rays,—
Oh, life thus rich in all men's love !
Oh, endless life ! For I should live
In all the ages as they move.

Let Fortune take, or let her give,
For me, for me, would be no death ;
I should go down to future days,
Immortal ever in men's breath,
Whose love should crown my head with bays.
Pilgrims from countries far and near
Would come as if to holy shrine
To see my art-work, which the ear
Had heard of as almost divine.
Not dearer Raphael's Babe would be,
His dove-eyed Virgin, sweet and mild,
Or Fra Beato's purity,
His Holy Family and Child.

Artist.

Enough ! Let others see my art
Forsooth, that they may praise its worth ?
I'd sooner shed, Friend, from my heart
Its blood in drops to dye the earth.
What ! send it to some gallery—hall ?
No ! not to get me wealth or name :
That were indeed for me a fall.
I care not, I, for empty fame,
For any critic's praise or gall ;
Better the rack than stand and hear
Men's idle talk,—“ This limb lacks verve,
Too full the lip, too small the ear,
These lines need beauty in the curve,

And from the proper roundness swerve."
'Twould drive me mad. Fame ! what is fame ?
An empty bubble on the stream,
The brilliant flashes of a flame,
The passing rapture of a dream.

Friend.

Well, then, we'll speak no more of fame,—
This rather,—what it were to reach
Men's hearts and kindle them to flame ;
Through Nature's symbols truth to teach,
And through her sensuous forms reveal
The eternal beauty, uncreate,
That all who see, with hearts elate,
May learn its loveliness to feel,
And bless the Art that showed what lies
'Neath Nature and her shapes divine,
Interpreting to th' unveiled eyes
The inner meaning through the sign.
Does not this touch you ? Would that I
Could outward throw my inmost soul !
'Twould be a joy, an ecstasy,
Bought cheap by travail, pain, and dole.
The artist is a prophet, too ;
His forms symbolic lead to God ;
For him the rain, the sun, the dew,
The little flower upon the sod,
Are full of meanings, meant to raise

The soul on soaring wings to heaven,
And give it voice to sing His praise.

Artist.

Enough ! enough ! I once thought so ;
That work without men's sweet applause
Was like the flower hid 'neath the snow ;
Thought I could teach the world true laws,
And show through symbols clearly seen
A beauty which is out of sight ;
How all things that have ever been
Have archetypes within God's light.
—That's o'er. Art is enough, sublime,
For all who love it. I would hold
My vision clear to see past time ;
Where Art is true, it smites self dead ;
Art only is the end of Art.
To outward form the thought to wed,
This satisfies at least my heart.
I am resolved no work of mine
Before the public eye shall go ;
Here will I build for it a shrine,
And round it loving words shall flow.
For the world's praise I do not sigh,
Nor care I if the public hiss :
For I must work, or else I die ;
My whole life burns to some such bliss
Of rhythmic thought as this ! as this !

E'en God Himself, when worlds were sown,
And planets glowed from east to west,
And star-fires shone around His throne,
Felt a new joy thrill through His breast
Because His thoughts in form were drest.
Creation in itself was bliss :
To see life streaming at His will,
Upheaving hills the heavens kiss,
And throbbing worlds the spaces fill.
Had never been an eye to see,
Or voice its wonder to upraise,
Not the less happy, Friend, were He ;
He needed not His creatures' praise.
Enough for me that I have wrought,—
I am content. I want no more.
Conception has expression caught.—
Nay, not a word, Friend, I implore ;
It shall not pass my studio door.

Friend.

Hold ! hold ! my friend. Was God content
To give expression to His powers,
With stars to stud the firmament,
To carpet dewy fields with flowers,
Sow seas with pearls, and light the mine
With gems, yet care not any eye should see
The evidence of love divine
In hill and dale, and lawn and lea ?

Angels sprang forth at His command,
 Intelligent to grasp the skill
 Which met their eye on every hand
 With charm of beauty at His will ;
 And man was formed to see, adore
 God in His work. Does it not prove
 God had a pleasure all the more
 When eyes beheld His works of love ?
 Was He content to dwell alone
 In vacant space or solitude,—
 His vast creative power unknown,
 What grace was His,—how great, how good ?
 Is not your argument at fault ?
 We crave for sympathy. Is't so ?

Artist.

You move me, Friend, indeed you do ;
 I feel at length inclined to yield ;
 Ah ! sweet is recognition due :
 You've almost driven me from the field.

Friend.

Nay, altogether. Come, confess
 There is a glory in the gift
 Our thoughts in outward forms to dress,
 And thus through beauty to uplift
 The man and purify the soul ;
 By brush, by chisel, or by word
 To touch the mind with joy or dole,

Till hearts with mighty thoughts are stirred ;
To call the dead past from its tomb,
Where so long buried it has lain ;
To re-illumine its dusky gloom,
And bid it live and breathe again ;
To tell the wonders that shall be
When all the future is unrolled,
And, prophet-like, to let men see
The glories of the age of gold ;
To grapple with some problem deep,
And make its hidden meanings plain ;
The universe to search and sweep,
And o'er its occult secrets reign ;
To touch all themes, and by them all
To make men nobler through our art,
Ah, this would I a triumph call ;
And surely this must move your heart.
'Twere pain,—yea, surely, it were pain
To speak great truths, yet have no ear
Bent to our high poetic strain ;
To sing, and yet with none to hear ;
Like unto some poor widow'd bird,
That through the day and all day long,
When leaves by summer winds are stirr'd,
Pipes its one sweet neglected song,
No mate to answer to the note
Which, rising from its swelling heart,
Distends its small melodious throat,

As on a bough it sits apart.

Artist.

We crave for sympathy. Is't so?
Suffices none for self? I had thought
Artist and Poet did. But no,
My heart owns all that thou hast taught,—
I see it now :—yes, 'tis delight
To shape what others fain would say,
To bring th' ideal into sight
From out the darkness where it lay,
And win from them a debt of love.
Yes, this is joy. I did but try
To think that I was raised above
The need for human sympathy,—
That art was its own perfect end,
Fulfilled itself by its own strength.
Alas ! the thought was vain, dear Friend.
This truth I have found out at length ;
I too would live from age to age
In hearts of men, and have a name
Held dear by all—simple and sage,—
Because I taught them—this my fame,—
Great truths made visible to the eye,
Which shall be theirs till time shall end ;
And so my mem'ry shall not die,
But with their happiest thoughts shall blend.
Yet that dear statue standing there,

Of one I loved, but far beneath
My model, sweet, and oh, so fair,
Torn from my arms by cruel Death,
That shall not meet the public gaze.
I'll build it, as I said, a shrine !
Never shall it appeal for praise :
It shall be mine and only mine !
But other stone I'll shape, and then
I may let that be seen of men.
But this—I've vowed it once before,
Shall never pass my studio door.

A BRAND FROM THE BURNING.

IT was a close and stifling summer day,
The August sun blazed hot upon the street ;
The little children were too tired to play,
And on the pavement was no sound of feet.

I passed through many an alley, many a lane,
Until I reached a low half-opened door,
Whose panels bore the mark of blotch and stain,
And with foul words were smirched and scribbled o'er.

This was the house I sought. I entered in,
And climbed at once the narrow winding stair
Which led me to the dark abode of sin—
A dismal chamber, wretched, poor, and bare.

With noiseless step I trod the darkened room,
And found myself beside a little bed ;
There, in the silence of the sultry gloom,
Upon the pillow lay a fair young head.

Bright were the eyes, dilated, restless, wild,
And in their depths there burned the fever-bale ;
In years she looked but little more than child ;
Her cheek, save for one hectic spot, was pale.

A girl in years, but prematurely old,
Her haggard face showed signs of wasting pain—
Spake of a story sad as e'er was told,
A heart despairing and a wildered brain.

And was this she whom in the bygone years
I well had known—a maiden good and pure—
Before her eyes were wet with many tears,
Or she been caught within a tempter's lure ?

Her glance met mine ; a sudden cry and shrill,
As from some hunted thing in deadly fear,
Rang through the room ; then all again was still,
Though lingered yet the echo on the ear.

And then rose up the old familiar days—
The croft, the village, and the little stream,
Orchards in bloom, green lanes, and quiet ways—
These came before me as a waking dream.

And Lilian—her parents' joy and pride,
 Fairest in all the country, near or far,—
Had she crept here, her guilty shame to hide,
 Lost in the darkness like a wandering star?

Without a word I sat down by the bed,
 As rapidly ran out life's failing sands ;
I smoothed the pillow for her dying head,
 And gently took in mine her burning hands.

For she had sinned ; was lost to fame and name ;
 And leaving home, became a waif and stray ;
Upon her brow was stamped the brand of shame—
 She wandered forth at night and shunned the day.

I knew her well ; she was a neighbour's child ;
 We played together on the upland lea,
And chased the butterflies on commons wild,
 And sang our songs beneath the spreading tree.

And so my thoughts went wandering o'er the past,
 Musing on all the sorrow and the sin,
"O God !" I cried, "how long is this to last !
 When will the better, brighter time come in ?"

Man ! Come and see the work that thou hast done,
 Matching thy strength against a woman weak ;
Mark well the victory that thou hast won,
 See it in haggard eye and hollow cheek.

Here in this soul God's image didst thou mar,
 Betraying love, and innocence, and trust ;
Leaving behind a stain, an unhealed scar ;
 Laying its glory even with the dust.

I turned, as low she moaned with labouring breath—
 The death-sweat stood in drops upon her brow ;
Her face was white and wan as ghastly death—
 Horror and anguish held it fully now.

“Lost ! Lost !” she cried, “Lost ! Lost !” and sobbed
 and wept,
 And wrung her faded hands, and raised her eyes ;
A shudd'ring tremor o'er her slowly crept,
 And shook her bosom with a storm of sighs.

I spake low words of comfort and of hope ;
 Of One who on the Cross for sin sufficed,
Whose grace with all her guiltiness could cope,
 And magnified the boundless love of Christ.

Oh, never did a hopeless, drowning wretch,
 Sinking beneath the overwhelming wave,
More eagerly a dying hand outstretch
 To clutch the rope which grasped might fully save.

Thus caught she at the tender loving word
 I breathed with yearnings in her hungry ear ;
Once and again she cried, “O Lord, good Lord !
 Jesu, have mercy ; a poor outcast hear !”

“And may I take,” she said, “such sweet relief,
And may I,—can I,—hope to be forgiven?”
I gently whispered of the dying thief
Who from a cross stepped up at once to heaven.

“And such the matchless grace for thee,” I said,
“No need is there that even thou despair;”
At which she meekly bowed a lowly head,
While trembled on her lips an earnest prayer.

A light came to her restless, fevered eye—
The flushed and troubled face at once grew calm;
Peace took the place of stormy agony,
And o’er the tortured spirit shed its balm.

But still the rapid death-march beat apace,
Through every quivering pulse and through her blood;
I saw the shadows steal across her face,
As by her bed, in silent prayer, I stood.

I marked the coming change on cheek and brow,
I heard the moan, the catchings of the breath;
The bitter fight was being fought out now,
And to that room had come dread ruthless death.

A sudden start: a low but thrilling cry:
Upon the face a quivering gleam of light:
Methought I heard the sound quick rushing by
As of a liberated spirit’s flight.

Then all was still. A silence filled the room,
And ended was the long and painful strife;
Another soul had pass'd from out the gloom,
And through the gate of death had entered life.

THE LOCUST-EATEN YEARS.

“And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten.”
JOEL, ii. 25.

O WORDS of wonder! What! restore the past,
Renew the olden days, the happy times,
The joys and pleasures that fled all too fast,
The hours that struck sweet music from their chimes?

Restore the trust in man that once we knew,
When no suspicion chilled or slew our love,
And all we met were good, and pure, and true,
Clear as the wave that glasses heaven above?

Restore the hope that threw a tender light
O'er the near future, and the distant years,
When life was full of fresh and sweet delight,
And held no hint of grief or bitter tears?

Restore full-hearted love, which knew not yet
That coldness can repay affection's smile ;
That lips can lightly promise, and forget
That 'neath the honied words lie cruel guile ?

Oh, can it be, and shall I stand once more
In the full light of childhood's early spring,
When every hour some fresh enjoyment bore,
And sang the heart as birds in May-time sing ?

Can even God to us the past restore,
Or cause the withered flower again to bloom,
The locust-eaten years give back once more,
Renewing joys long buried in the tomb ?

'Tis even so—He can give back the years
By locusts eaten, fretted by the worm ;
Can make us reap in joy who sowed in tears ;
Can bring tranquillity from out the storm.

The barren wastes shall blossom all with flowers,
And roses spring from out the arid sands :
Bright suns shall shine, and fall the tender showers,
And verdure crown with beauty all the lands.

Fear not ; the floors shall all be full of wheat,
The vats shall overflow with ruddy wine,
And for the bitter God shall give the sweet,
And for the earthly grant us the Divine.

Let us not cast regretful looks behind,
Rather believe God will the past restore,
That, when we enter heaven we shall find,
The years are ours again for evermore.

CHRIST AT THE DOOR.

THE night had drawn her dusky veil
O'er all the landscape far and nigh,
And in the heavens the moonlight pale
Shed lustre from the solemn sky.
The world was wrapped in slumber deep,
Save where a mourner waked to weep.

Who is it knocks at yonder door,
His face so strangely sweet and fair,
Standing and knocking evermore,
With urgent hand and tender air?
A crown of thorns is on His head;
His eyes are full of tears unshed.

Wet are His locks with dews of night;
The eager winds blow cold and chill;
But in His eyes there burns the light
Of love that overcometh ill.

Patient, untired, He waits before
That long-closed, barred, and bolted door.

The latch is rusted, and the way
Is all o'ergrown with thorns and weeds ;
Dark are the panels, stained and grey,
And here the canker-worm feeds.
All so neglected and forlorn,
That one might pass it by in scorn.

It is the Saviour at the door,
Wooing the sullen soul behind,
Who in His pity doth implore
That He an entrance there may find.
“Open,” He cries, “poor soul, to Me ;
I will come in and sup with thee.

“Behold, I stand, I stand and knock—
Open, dear heart, and let me in ;
Wilt thou My mercy scorn and mock,
For siren laughter, lust, and sin ?
Dreary the night, the dawn is late ;
Ah ! must I here for ever wait ?

“Through days of heat, and days of cold,
Through nights all wild and dark and chill,
I stand as I have stood of old,
Seeking to overcome thy will.

Lo, here I am ; I knock again ;
Let not this knocking be in vain.

“’Tis love alone that keeps Me here,
Blessings to thee that I may bring ;
Open, there is no cause for fear ;
I’ll make thy very heart to sing.
Receive Me as thy friend, and rest
Shall fill and flood thy weary breast.

“ And then when in the days to come,
The world has passed and time is o’er,
Thou seekest entrance to My home,
And standest knocking at My door,
Then will I open unto thee,
And thou shalt ever live with Me.

“ A royal banquet shall be thine,
A feast of bliss that cannot cloy :
The bread of God, and heaven’s own wine,
Whate’er can fill thy soul with joy.
Open, dear soul, the long-closed door,
And I am thine for evermore.”

THE SLEEP.

SHE is not dead. She only lies a-sleeping,
 Her dear head pillowed on her Saviour's breast ;
 Then why this wringing of the hands and weeping ?
 There is no cause for tears ; she is at rest.

She is at rest from all the pain and sorrow,
 The cares and roughness of the toilsome way,
 The doubts, the anxious fears about the morrow,
 The burning heat and burden of the day.

Our God has called her to Himself in heaven,
 And set her full within that perfect light,
 Where morning never darkens into even,
 Where noon ne'er waning fades into a night.

Her voice is no more tuned to notes of sadness,
 But lifts itself in sweet and holy psalm ;
 Her face is all alight with wondering gladness,
 Her hand is waving the victorious palm.

O happy spirit, happy now for ever !

More bless'd than thought conceives, or tongue can tell,
The chilling winds of grief shall reach thee never,
Round thee no tempests rage, nor billows swell.

Nor art thou lost ; for when our Christ shall gather
His ransomed round Him on the sapphire floor,
When He presents them all unto the Father,
Thou shalt be ours again for evermore.

Sweet sleep of death ! and oh, the sweet awaking
Within the arms of everlasting love !
Oh, smile of God upon Thy children breaking,
To bid them welcome to the home above !

She is not dead ; she only lies a sleeping,
With eyelids closed, hands folded on her breast ;
Hush thy sad cries, restrain thy bitter weeping,
Life's toil is over, and she—she is at rest.

GOD'S CHASTENINGS.

SHRINK not from sorrows ; 'tis not wise—
 They are but mercies in disguise ;
 Ladders by which we mount and rise.

“ Ministering spirits,” they are sent
 As Angels from God's firmament,
 On heavenly messages intent.

Take them in love ; in love they come,
 To call our heart to that fair home
 From which it is so prone to roam.

Learn from each grief its lesson true,
 What God would have thee think and do,
 What path avoid, or road pursue.

Whate'er betide, whate'er befall,
 Be very sure there's love in all ;
 Love, though it fret, and wound, and gall.

For thus, through trouble, shame and loss,
By many a bitter pang and cross,
He would refine and purge the dross.

Look then on sorrow as a friend ;
Rough means unto a gracious end :
As on the heavenly way you wend.

You cry to God that He would spare
The wintry days and bitter air,
The wasting trouble and the care.

You long for pastures green and still,
The sheltered way, the gentle rill,
The summer days, the wooded hill.

Yet winter has its use, and frost ;
Without them many a hope were crost ;
The golden harvest spoiled and lost.

They kill the noxious worm, the weed,
And baneful creatures that would feed
Upon the precious buried seed.

Thus trial is a wholesome thing ;
Though sharpest grief our hearts may wring,
It doth with it a blessing bring.

Give it fair welcome ; all God's ways
Will call forth endless strains of praise,
Throughout the long eternal days.

THE PARSON'S STORY.

SHE wore a look of sorrow in her face,
Had eyes that seemed long used to weep.
Young was she, with a sweet and gentle grace,
Which through such griefs as hers 'twas hard to keep.
Pale as a lily, wan, and worn, and thin,—
A woman who had borne and suffered long,—
Had passed through scenes of sorrow and of sin,
And known not only trial, but some wrong.
There ran a sad, deep undertone
Through all her broken, plaintive words,
Like music struck from trembling chords,
Which lives and lingers when the tune is done,
And soundeth still upon the ear
In echoes soft, and sweet, and clear.

A flush rose to her white and faded cheek,
As in low accents faint, and sad and weak,

She said, with heart that inly bled,
“ Sir, you would hear my piteous tale ? ”
Then 'gan her voice with sudden break to fail ;
The words refused to come,
And she was dumb.
After a moment's pause she said again,
With a sharp spasm of the keenest pain,
“ 'Tis a sad story, sir, in truth.
One grief has withered all my youth ;
Before my time has made me old,
Both heart and hope are dead and cold ;
The sunshine gone for ever—passed away—
Life is a night, on which shall dawn no day.”

Just as she spake the cold moon gleamed
From out a cloud, and with her light
Blanched all the bed whereon she lay,
And o'er it fully streamed,
Making the chamber bright ;
Then came a cloud that hid the moon from sight,
And now a gusty, angry breeze
Swayed the strong branches of the leafy trees,
And mingled with the sobbing of the rain
That swept in driving and in heavy showers,
And beat against the window-pane,
And on the drooping petals of the sleeping flowers.

Thus she began once more :

“ Sir, would you hear it all ? My struggle, painful, sore ?

Well, then, you shall. O angels that above
Are touched by human sin and human woe,
Is this all man's return for woman's love—
Starvation, curses,—now a kick,—or blow ?
See here ; ”

Then from her eyes she dashed a tear,
And throwing back the cloud of golden hair
That covered all her bosom soft and fair,
She stripped her arm, and to the shoulder laid it bare ;
Then showed me there—and there—and there—
Many a bruise and many a scar ;
And one large, deep, and ugly wound,
With a red circle running round,
In shape like to a rayed and jagged star.

“ Oh, what is this ? ” I asked with 'bated breath :

And 'mid a silence deep,

As deep as death,

She in a voice that made me creep,
Said slow,—“ My husband—William—he !

I cried to him, and prayed him to be kind,

And to have pity, mercy on the wife

Who gave to him her all, her love, her life.

But he was not in his right mind—

Mad, I think. A devil had entered in—

A cruel fiend men know as gin.

The demon looked from out his bloodshot eyes ;

It scathed me in his hot and thirsty breath,
Spake in his voice with loud and angry cries,
And threatened me with death !
For he was drunk. He snatched the cruel knife,
And struck me here ; me—*me*—his *wife* !
He struck me, and the blood came welling fast.
I fell, all sick and faint, upon the bed,
And there I lay in agony and dread,
And thought that this hour surely was my last.
Certain I feel he would have killed me there ;
Had God not, in this moment of despair,
Sent a friendly neighbour in
To save him from such dark and damning sin.”
Her voice here failed with such a piteous moan,
I felt my swelling heart was all aglow
With horror, indignation, and deep shame.
And now my passion broke, with anger in each tone,
As I beheld her rocking to and fro,
While thick and fast the hot tears quickly came :
“What ! is man’s heart, then, colder than a stone ?
As cruel as the tiger, or the bear
Bereavèd of her whelps, that from her lair
Springs with fierce leap on all who venture near,
Insensible to ruth and ignorant of fear ?”

I spake out from my wrath, and from my pain ;
And then there was deep silence once again.

In that dead hush I looked, and saw the pale moonbeams
Shining from out the clouds in wan and fitful gleams ;
I heard the sighing of the wind ; the rain
Beat loud in passionate gusts against the pane,
Then ceased,—and all once more was still ;
The fire was burning low, the night was chill.

Then spake she once again,
With a voice that shook with pain,
And her tones made me shrink :
“ It was the drink ! the drink !
No kinder man, no better man than he
When he is sober ; none, sir, there can be
More tender. Ah ! those happy, happy days
When he was steady, and our home was blest !
Love dwelt in it, and peace, and rest,
And sunshine brightened all our household ways.
'Tis true we worked for daily bread—were poor ;
But sorrow never came within our door.
Then the dear time, when all the work was done,
And we together walked in the fair summer eves
Amidst the ripe and yellow harvest sheaves.
I mind me how we wandered one sweet spring,
When mating birds made all the copses ring,
Our way lay through the meadow 'neath the hill,
Where ran o'er pebbly bed the tuneful rill.
The sky was glowing like to molten fire,
As in a golden glory set the sinking sun ;

If ever wife was happy, I, sir, was that one.
We saw the lark rise higher, ever higher,
Soaring to mid-heaven with pinions strong and fleet,
Ere dropped he to his nest within the wheat.
All fragrant scents came from the hedgerows green,
The happy world seemed free from pain and teen.
We thought too quickly went the swift-winged time,
As on our ears the clock began to chime
The hour,
From the old church tower.

“ But now, alas ! ’tis strange, ’tis strange !
How there could come this cruel change ;
These bare, unfurnished walls ; this room
So dark, and drear, and full of gloom !
Alas ! that I have lived to see this hour !
Oh, better had I perished in the flower
Of my first sweet wedded bliss,
Ere it had come to this ! to this ! ”

A shudder o’er her crept :
She bowed her head upon her hands and wept ;
And her hot tears, like showers of rain,
Flowed down again, and yet again.

“ But worse than all,” she said, “ my child ! my child
He lies there in that cradle bruised and maimed.
O God, I am ashamed !

My boy, pure, sweet, and undefiled !
The other night came William, wild with drink.
Oh, that night ! that night !
I,—I was sitting there,
In yonder chair,
Watch keeping by the flickering candle-light.
He snatched my little one from out its bed,
And with an oath that made me shrink
And smote my heart with awe and dread,
He raised him high upon his arm.
I cried, “ For God’s sake, William, do the child no harm ! ”
And the poor boy—he gave a scream so shrill,
And angered William so—
He struck it one fierce blow,
Then all was still.
O woe ! woe !
I too was stricken ; heart-broken by that blow—
The child I thought was killed, no more it cried.
I took it from him, white as winter snow,
Its blue eyes closed : a look like death it wore ;
I scanned and scanned its features o’er and o’er,
And tears ran down at will.
What could I do but weep, and wipe the blood
That oozed from the pale lips ? My husband stood,
And looked with wild and wandering gaze,
And eyes with some strange fire ablaze ;
And then he passed and staggered through the door,
And I was left with the poor child once more.

I took it to my breast ; it stirred, it breathed again,
And from my heart was loosed the tightening pain.
I nursed it through the long, long night,
Until the cold wan morning light
Shone through the window. And my boy—my boy
Revived—my sad heart's only joy.

“ But when the parish doctor came,
I felt a sudden heat of shame,
To lay at William's door the blame.
I said, ‘ The little thing has had a fall.’
May God forgive me for that lie—
Forget it, blot it out, and pass it by !
I could not, dare not, tell him all.
I saw at once he doubted what he heard ;
He looked his doubt, but did not say a word ;
And in his eyes sorrow and pity stirred.
A kindly man that doctor ; none could be
More gentle with the little one than he.
He nursed it, sir, as any mother might,
And came to see him often, day and night.
The boy got well ; the Lord's be all the praise !
But he was ill for days, and days, and days :
Hung long 'twixt death and life ;
At last youth conquered in the bitter strife.
He is not what he was before that awful night ;
Then he was strong and active, happy, bright ;
Now he is sickly, with a scared look in his face,

And large sad eyes. I often fear
He will not long be with me here.
I fain would keep him : but is this true love ?
Were it not best for him to pass to heaven above ?”

“Your husband,” said I, “does he not relent ?
Saved from a deed of blood, he must repent ?
Is he not now a changed, a better man ?”
Then through her weakened frame a shiver ran :
“No change,” she said, in whisper of despair—
“No change—my life ”——she paused. Upon the stair
A step was heard—a man’s. “There—hear !
He comes ! Oh, save me, sir, from what I fear !
Oft in his cups he’ll bruise, or maim, or kill,
Do any desperate deed or work of ill.
When he has drank out all the night
I dread him—dread his drunken sight.
Save me, for God’s sake save my child !
For him I fear the most, some outrage rough :
Save me and him,—I’ve borne enough—enough !”

She clung to me with looks distracted, wild ;
The latch was lifted—in her husband came ;
And on his cheek there burnt a spot like flame.
But he was sober, and his step and gait
Were steady. Downcast was his look,
And all his frame with some strange passion shook.

" Ah, parson, is it you? I'm something late ;
I've not been home for two days and a night ;
And was she anxious what might be my fate ?
No ! no ! no good I brought to her ; or to her home ;
Was it not fitting I should shun her sight ?
Better to keep away ; why should I come ?
I'm glad you're here, sir. What ! she's told you all ?
My sin, my cruelty, my wickedness and fall ?
O Mary, Mary ! patient, loving wife,
I've been thy bane, have blighted thy young life ;
And the fair child, our darling and our joy,
I might have killed him—killed my sweetest boy !
Ah ! sir, they know it well,
I've turned this house into a living hell."

He sobbed convulsively, the strong man shook,
Remorse and anguish in his voice and look.
" William, dear William," the poor wife began,
And then adown her cheeks the hot tears ran :
" William, it was not *you*—it was the gin ;
In your right mind you'd never do such sin.
The past is past—we will forgive, forget—
Come, dear, we may—we will be happy yet."

" Hold, wife," he said, " until my story's told,
And then, but not before, I'll dare to hold
Thee to my heart, and all shall be
As in the dear old days for thee and me.

I turned to-night into a Hall—a place
Where, love ! a man, and heaven was in his face,
Spoke of the drink, and how it brings a curse,
Brings shame, and ruin, and disgrace,
Works madness, and disease, and worse.
At me he looked, and pierced me to the soul,
Painted *my* home—a drunkard's—and the shame,
The sorrow, that it brings on name and fame ;
And one by one he did unroll
The thousand ills that from this fountain flow,
'The mourning, lamentation, and the woe.'
In fear I cowered, blasted by each word,
That burnt into my soul, and horror stirred,
And from my heart arose a cry for grace,
As I sat, conscience-stricken, in my place.
The good Lord heard me—*me*, in that vast crowd,
As there, unheard by all, I inly vowed
Never to touch or taste again the drink,
That led me onward to the dreadful brink
Of hell,—that placed its brand
Upon my brow, and raised this hand
Against thee, Mary, 'gainst the darling boy,
Whom the good Lord in heaven above
Lent to our home to be its hope and joy.
Ah, wife ! ah, love ! ah, love !
You look half scared ; you think I mad must be.
I am not mad—I *was*—not now. I'm sane and free ;
Sweetheart, there is a better life for thee and me,

And for this child, dearer than I can tell.
Save him, great God ! he must, he will get well.
O Christ ! I kneel to Thee, my voice I raise ;
Here I renounce my sin, and sinful ways :
Forgive the past ; send peace to this poor home ;
In Thy good grace let mercy to it come ;
My sins are crimson, let Thy pardon flow,
And red shall be as wool, scarlet as white as snow !”

He knelt, and there was peace, and joy, and praise ;
The night had passed ; the dawn of better days
Was breaking like the dayspring of the morn,
And with it light, and life, and hope were born.

The purpling day stole through the window-pane,
The wind had ceased ; no longer beat the rain.
The distant hills were touched with radiance fair,
And cool, and fresh, and fragrant came the air.
And as I left the house, and homeward took my way,
’Mid dewy lanes, and in the broadening day,
I thought with joy of one more soul at rest ;
Of one more home that grace had richly blest ;
And seemed to hear the harps of heaven resound,
“ My son, once dead, now lives ; the lost is found ! ”

LIONEL AND MARGARET.

PART I.

IT is the golden summer time,
Lovely the earth as in its prime,
When beauty glowed in Eden's bowers,
And sparkled in its blushing flowers ;
When all things wore the radiant dye,
The hue of immortality.
Fair and pleasant is the scene :
A sloping lawn of tender green
Is set amidst a ring of trees,
And flow'rs attract the honey bees,
Whose hum is heard upon the breeze.
Southward there gleams a tranquil lake,
Where, in a thousand ripples, break
The waves that shine like diamonds bright
In the fair morning's glowing light.
And near the house a fountain plays,
Which leaps to meet the sun's bright rays ;
And then falls back with cooling sound,
Scattering bright rainbow showers around.

Upon this fair and fragrant lawn,
In youth's first flush and rosy dawn,
A merry group of children play
And with their sport beguile the day ;
Such children as to us are given,
As if to say—" Of such is heaven."
Some chase, with lightsome step and spring,
The butterfly's enamelled wing ;
Some gather flow'rets fresh and fair,
And twine them in their wavy hair.
Or to their voices' music sweet,
In graceful dance advance, retreat ;
And ever come upon the ear,
Sweet joyous shouts and laughter clear,
Wild bursts of uncontrollèd glee,
And innocent glad revelry.
But two, apart from all the throng,
Nor heed the dance, nor list the song,
A boy and girl, in life's first pride,
Sit near each other, side by side.
Of different beauty each, though fair,
He with dark eyes, and raven hair ;
Her tresses sunny, and her eye
Steeped in the heaven's bluest dye.
As two flowers growing from one stem,
Whose dewy petals meet and twine
As two gems in a diadem,
With the one lustre flash and shine

So these fair children, sweet and young,
As any minstrel ever sung,
Near to each other, sit apart,
One in hope, and one in heart.

Here, in the early summer light,
In childhood's morning, glad and bright,
With the roses blooming near,
And slender lilies tall, and clear,
These two have come from all the others,
Friends and sisters, fathers, brothers.
He o'er her tenderly doth bow,
And twines a garland for her brow ;
While she, with sweet and artless smile,
Looks up into his eyes the while,
And glows her cheek with youthful pride,
As he lisping calls her "little bride."
O happy days, so fair and bright !
O world, all clad in tender light !
O radiant hours, must ye then pass
Like shadows flitting o'er the grass ?

And now the delicate feast is laid
Beneath the beeches in the shade,
And here glow ripe and mellow fruits,
With dulcet creams, and juicy roots ;
Red grapes and amber from the vine,
That like to lustrous jewels shine ;
All that could please these children fair,
Was placed in plenteous bounty there.

So passed the happy hours away,
Until in beauty closed the day.
The sun in splendour rich and bright,
His bed a couch of rosy light,
Sank slowly to his evening rest,
Flooding with glory all the glowing west.
Then sounded from the old church tower
The curfew-bell, toiling the parting hour ;
Its solemn chime falling upon the ear,
Now loud and high, now deep and clear.
Then came the pleasant eventide,
And all the heavens, far and wide,
Were filled with stars, which gleamed and shone
Around the white moon on her throne.
The flowers had long since closed their eyes,
The fair white lily, and the crimson rose ;
But still they send forth fragrant sighs,
And all their sweetness they disclose.
The birds are silent in the trees,
Nor is there heard the whisper of a breeze.
Only one bird prolongs her note,
And she, the sweet-voiced nightingale,
Fills with her music all the dale,
Which gushing from her swelling throat,
A hurried and a passionate strain,
Echo awake repeats again
In modulated love and pain.
And when the happy birds and bees

Flew to their homes amongst the trees,
And dewy flowr's, as daylight fled,
Slept with shut eyes and drooping head,
The children sought each their mother's nest,
And soon were folded to her breast.
They parted all, and calm came down,
A benediction like a crown
Resting in blessing on each brow
That lay in happy slumber now.

Oh, who may say what after fate
These joyous little ones await?
Oh, who may tell if bliss or woe
Shall be their portion here below?
Shout! shout! make echo ring again
With your wild, mirthful glee;
Your brows are yet undimmed by pain,
Your hearts from care are free.
Shout! shout and laugh! for coming years
May turn your mirth and joy to tears.
Then visions of these youthful days,
And of this sunlit green,
Will flit across your weary gaze;
And joys that once have been,
Into new life shall rush, and start,
Will pierce the brain, and wring the heart,
Will bring fresh tears, and bitter sorrows,
Thoughts of sweet yesterdays, and sad to-morrows;
And you will feel that years of pain
Would cheaply purchase hours of youth again.

PART II.

Time passed ; they came and went, the months and years,
And brought their changes as they hurried by ;
To some they bore sad thoughts and bitter tears,
Regrets and memories that raised a sigh ;
To others rest and pleasures sweet and deep,
Bright days of joy, and nights of peaceful sleep.

And what of those who met in that bright scene,
When summer flushed the sky with tender light,
And hills and valleys clothed themselves in green,
And the whole earth looked fresh, and pure, and bright,
Or if a shadow fell across the way,
It only shed a softened lustre on the day ?

Ah, what of them, the young, the gay, the free,
Who played together on the emerald grass,
And laughed and danced in merry childish glee,
And chased the shadows as they saw them pass,
And shouted to the echoes, which again
Replied to them in sweet and mocking strain !

Their fates are various : some on foreign shore
Their fortunes seek, and some upon the main ;
Some toil amid the city's deaf'ning roar,
With weary hand, and sweat of brow and brain ;
Some burn the midnight oil, and some are wed ;
And others lie at rest amongst the quiet dead.

And the fair Girl and Boy, who in their youth
Were lovers, and whose souls were early knit
To one another with firm strength and truth,
For whom the future was all rainbow lit
With hopes that made the common earth and air
Seem like transfigured things divinely fair ?

Well, for a time they lived as in a dream ;
They met and parted, parted, met again,
And ran their lives in one full happy stream,
Nor was there aught of sorrow or of pain ;
And thus to live at all was very sweet,
And flowers sprang up and blossom'd round their feet.

And so their life and being grew all one,
As twilight mingles with the dying day ;
Or as some cloud, that lies anear the sun,
Is interpenetrated with his ray ;
They knew not thought, or wish, or grief apart,
But answered perfectly each heart to heart.

O love, O youth and love, before whose eyes
The future gleams, bathed in ideal light,
And the whole world becomes a paradise,
And hours are winged with pleasures in their flight,
And flowers on earth, and stars in heaven above,
More radiant grow, touched by the spell of love !

Neighbours they were, her father and his sire :
Their homes divided by broad pasture ground
And stretch of hill, but both in one fair shire,
Near to a river, which, with plashing sound,
Rolled thro' the meadows in a spacious sweep,
And held a tranquil course unto the deep.

Her sire was lord of acres rich and broad,
And in the north owned mountain, lake, and moor ;
His lands were unto him a kind of god,
But in true wealth he was indeed most poor.
Strip him of acres which to him were all,
And what was left ? A thing immeasurably small.

It was his moneys, houses, his estate,
That others bowed to, not the man within ;
His outward robes made all he had of great,
The soul beneath was poor, and weak, and thin,
Unwind a mummy from its garish sheath,
What see you there ? A thing of dust and death.

His father was of good and gentle birth,
True gentleman, not honoured for his gold ;
Some part, not much, he had in God's green earth,
A few ancestral fields on weald and wold ;
Rich only in seven sons, whose brain and hand
Must win their fortunes, and success command.

Too soon there came the waking : with a start
Their happy dreams were brought to sudden end ;
Their doom was now to separate, to part,
Or hold each other only as a friend.
Her father frowned on him since he was poor,
So they must meet no more, weep, and endure.

Easy to counsel patience—bid forget ;
But hard to carry out the stern command,
When the heart breaks, and eyes with tears are wet,
And hope is wrecked like vessel on the strand,
And life is blank, a story all unread,
And them we count the happy who are dead.

So these two found it, yet they bore up well,
And trusted firmly one another's faith,
Knowing whatever sorrow them befell,
That naught should part them,—naught at least but death ;
Faithful to one another they should be,
Though far divided by the cruel sea.

And so they were strong-hearted, though it cost
Them many a bitter pang to separate ;
And hope and joy, and life itself seemed lost,
And the whole world to them desolate ;
And that most bitter of all words, " Farewell,"
Sounded as sad as sounds a funeral bell.

* * * * *

'Tis evening : all the birds are fast asleep,
The flowers have closed their petals near and far,
And glow-worms out of flowery hedges creep,
To light their lamps, which burn like some bright star,
On leaves where shimmering dew-drops flashing shine,
And on the bluebell, and sweet eglantine.

No whisper of the wind is heard to-night
Amongst the grasses or the branching trees ;
And not a cloud crosses the moon's fair light,
Or dims the grace of her white majesties ;
A hush lies on the earth, calm, peaceful, still,
Silence on valley, wooded copse, and hill.

The only sound is that of waters clear,
Which singing run across a pebbled bed,
And wind beneath the banks, now there, now here,
And from a fountain in the hills are fed ;
They make sweet music as they trickle by,
Glassing within their wave the starry sky.

There is a little bridge across the river,
Near which grow gnarled oak, and ash-trees pale,
And one tall poplar, all whose grey leaves shiver
Though not a breath of wind stirs in the dale ;
And a fair willow weeps above the stream,
Which glides along with many a glint and gleam.

And here they meet, these two so soon to part,
Hand clasped in hand, and eyes all wet with tears ;
A pang like that of death at either heart,
Torn with a thousand sorrows, doubts, and fears,
Which from the future took all joy and trust,
And kill'd sweet hope, and laid it in the dust.

A lovely maiden she, robed in the light
Of innocence and youth ; deep blue her eyes,
Intense as are the heavens in summer night,
When myriad stars shine in the cloudless skies ;
Sunny her hair, and golden, as some ray
Of sunshine wandering there had lost its way.

A mind to match the face, pure, gentle, good,
Quick to conceive, rapid to understand,
Attuned to catch each subtle varying mood
Of joy or grief ; an open, liberal hand ;
A tender heart, a voice of softest tone ;
A soul to make the griefs of others all her own.

And he was worthy of this lady fair—
His sympathies all with the right and true ;
His thoughts to God and man might all lie bare,
And be exposed unto the general view ;
For nothing low or mean, untrue or base,
Had there a lodgment or a dwelling-place.

A valiant soldier was he of the cross,
One not ashamed to live above the world,
Content to bear the pain, and suffer loss,
His banner bravely borne, not idly furled ;
The foes of Christ were his ; he boldly trod
The upward path that led to heaven and God.

He was about to sail for southern lands,
Where suns are larger, brighter moons by night,
Where lustrous stars burn over golden sands,
And birds flash by, like gems of living light.
Not thither drawn by any selfish hope,
But that with sin and sorrow he might cope.

No restless enterprise attracts his heart,
Ambition, commerce, draw him not afar ;
He seeks not wealth upon the foreign mart,
Nor honour on the bloody fields of war ;
Nor would he dig for treasure in the mine
Where the red gold or gleaming diamonds shine.

Nor goes he to trace rivers to their source,
Or bring from dusty tombs the mummied dead ;
Not his to quell the savage beast by force,
Or track the cruel tiger to his bed ;
Nor is his only wish to wander, where
The skies are bluer, more divine the air.

He leaves his home a messenger of peace,
To open fountains sweet in thirsty grounds,
To tell how guilty souls may find release,
And gladden weary ears with joyful sounds ;
To give the wretched balsam for their woes,
And make the desert blossom as the rose.

Had he gone forth fair fortune's smiles to gain,
Her father on his love had smiled, not frowned ;
He had not sued for Margaret's hand in vain,
This gift his deep affection then had crowned.
But what could a poor soldier of the cross
Expect, but poverty, hardship, and loss ?

And she would fain have followed where he led,
And joined with his her hand and future fate ;
With him no pain or hardship would she dread,
Or ever at his side feel desolate.
There was no sacrifice she would not make,
The greater, all the better, for his sake.

It might not be : a father's will said " nay,"
And by her pleading was not to be bent,
Although she wept, and weeping, oft did pray,
She could not win her wish, or his consent ;
She only could take refuge in her God,
And meekly bow the head, and kiss the rod.

And what could Lionel do but dry her tears,
And whisper words in strong and hopeful tone,
And bid her look beyond the weary years,
When he would come and make her all his own ;
And then the keenness of their happy bliss
Would more than compensate such pain as this ?

He spoke of God, of hope, of love, of all
That could shed balm upon her troubled breast ;
And gently sought each motive to recall
That possibly might soothe her heart to rest ;
And then the shadow passed from out her eyes,
And, looking up, she smiled in hopeful wise.

And then he stood and kissed away her tears,
And held her trembling to his throbbing heart ;
And, torn with anguish and contending fears,
He turned away as if indeed to part ;
Then turned again to take one last long look,
While thrilled his frame, and all his pulses shook.

Thus went they on their sad and several ways,
Beneath the passionless and gleaming skies,
From which the moon shed down her clear cold rays,
And stars looked out with bright and pitiless eyes ;
And with a slow and faltering step they pass
Across the long and dewy meadow-grass.

So parted they in sorrow and in tears ;
Yet in their hearts faith beat both high and pure,
And hope was strong that in the coming years
Was happiness for them both true and sure,
That though to-night they two must part and sever,
It could not be, it would not be, for ever.

Sundered they were by cruel breadths of sea,
Which rolled between, and kept them far apart ;
But severed from each other they might be,
Yet still they grew together heart to heart,
And prayers and thoughts were wafted o'er the deep,
And oft they met in dreams in happy sleep.

Her father was of shallow heart and brain,
Not cruel, and not wantonly unkind,
And so not wholly careless of their pain ;
No vow of silence on them did he bind :
He hoped and thought their love would wax in time,
Faint as the echo of a childish rhyme.

And so, in word at least, being left unbound,
Letters were sent as they occasion made,
Or fitting opportunity was found ;
But always were they more or less afraid,
That soon this solace even might be gone,
The silent sanction which he gave withdrawn.

These letters, filled with tender words of love,
Affection's messengers, came oft from him ;
Letters esteemed by her all things above,
And read with beatings of the heart, eyes dim
With tears,—dear letters, read and read again,
Taking from sorrow something of its pain.

And the sweet pages he received from her,
At intervals too long, came like a ray
Of sunshine to his life, each pulse did stir,
And brought a light into his darkened day,
And often when weighed down by heavy care,
Buoyant he felt as though he trod on air.

At length her patient look, her paler cheek,
The heart that broke beneath a quiet mien,
The faltering step, that daily grew more weak,
The change that was too plain not to be seen,
Touched those that saw her daily weep and sigh,
And brought the fear that she would pine and die.

And so her sorrow won them to relent,
And say her will should also now be theirs ;
That to her marriage they would give consent,
And yield the answer to her silent prayers ;
And so, like flowers in sunshine after rain,
Her drooping heart revived, grew strong again.

'The news was sent across the severing sea,
That Lionel at once to her might come ;
"For God," she said, "has gracious been to me,
A light has shone again into my home ;
Once thought I we should never meet, dear love,
Until our meeting in the home above.

"But He has left me here to cheer thy way,
To comfort thee in sorrow and in care ;
To walk beside thee every coming day,
Thy work for Him, as I have strength, to share ;
So to be near thee all my happy life,
A true, a faithful, and a loving wife."

And thus again the weary world grew bright,
The skies seemed clearer, and the flowers more fair ;
The earth was robed in hues of richer light,
Filled with a purer and diviner air ;
The grass was greener 'neath her happy feet,
The song of birds more joyous and more sweet.

The time was fixed for Lionel to leave
The gorgeous tropics for sweet English shore ;
And ah, what pleasant visions did they weave !
How they should meet, and meet to part no more ;
For ever would they move on side by side,
Earth's happiest bridegroom, and its happiest bride.

And thus the days passed on, the weeks flew by,
The ship he was to sail in ploughed the deep ;
The hours she counted with a happy sigh,
And dreams of Lionel gave joy to sleep.
Each morning woke her with a new delight,
The time was shorter since the previous night.

At length her hope was crowned, the ship had come,
And dropped her anchor in an English bay ;
Had made a prosperous voyage o'er the foam,
And favouring winds had borne her on her way ;
And as she heard the glad'ning news, I wis
That Margaret's heart was full of sweetest bliss.

A joyous song burst from her happy tongue,
Then broke, then thrilled again, then ended there,
For she was restless, kept to nothing long,
Roamed through the house, stepped out into the air ;
She had been early up before the dawn,
Tended the swans, and fed the little fawn.

At dusky eve she sought the little wood,
Just as the rounded moon rose white and pale ;
And then, in sad and yet half happy mood,
She stood and listened to the nightingale,
As from its throat the song began to flow,
Now quick and hurried, and now soft and low.

She stood entranced in deep and silent thought,
Nor moved until a hasty step drew near,
Which to her temples all the colour brought,
Yet shook her with a nameless dread and fear.
She turned, she saw her father come in sight,
Wan as a moonbeam on the edge of night.

She watched him as he came, she saw him stand
Close at her side, yet stirred not, was quite still ;
He held an open letter in his hand,
She could not take it, had no power or will ;
She only stared at him, and held her breath,
With eyes all wild, and face as white as death.

She knew it all before he uttered word,
Before the cruel news was said or spoken ;
And when it came, it smote her like a sword,
And the poor loving heart at once was broken.
She made no cry, no moan, nor any sound,
But fell all lifeless, smitten to the ground.

Yes, he was dead. Before his time to sail,
Illness had stretched him on a hopeless bed,
Where long he lay, held by the fever bale,
And from that couch he never raised his head.
Disease was rapid, poisoned every vein,
And racked and tortured him with burning pain.

His last thoughts were of heaven and Margaret,
Her name was interwoven with each prayer ;
And if his eyes with tears grew ever wet,
It was to think his death would bring her care.
He sent her words and messages of love,
And told her they should meet ere long above.

And once his fancy wandered, and he dreamed
He played with her upon the meadow green ;
And once again it happy May-time seemed,
As in the long-pass'd days it once had been.
And, rising up, he said, " I hear the swell
From the old church of the dear Curfew-bell."

And so he died ; and there beside the wave,
Where he had laboured long for Christ and God,
They buried him, and dug his lonely grave,
And planted English flowers upon the sod ;
And left him there to sleep, in that low bed,
Until the day when earth shall yield her dead.

And she—she did not die : she envied death ;
Had she her will she would have lain all white
Upon her bier—to God resigned her breath,
And hid her hopeless sorrow from the light,
She would have slept, and with delighted eyes
Have waked to see her Lionel in Paradise.

It was not yet to be,—not yet ; she must
Live on and on, and so she bowed her will
To God's, and prayed for patience and for trust ;
And praying, grew resigned, and calm, and still,
And lived for others, sought to heal their grief,
And doing so, found for herself relief.

Her gentleness and patience were most sweet,
No one e'er heard a murmur for her woes ;
She lived to tend her father, and to meet
Life's daily duties as they daily rose.
But still of her dead self she was the ghost,
All joy and happiness being slain and lost.

And so ran out the sad and lonely years,
Linked each to each by hours of bitter pain,
For though she smiled for others, oftener tears
Flowed from an aching heart and weary brain.
Had she so pleased she might have often wed,
But love and hope were buried with the dead.

And thus she gently faded, day by day :
They saw her slowly die before their eyes ;
And then all quietly she passed away,—
Smiling she passed, and not with tears or sighs.
Her heart had gone before her to the shore,
Where she and Lionel would meet once more.

* * * * *

What is the meaning of the Christian life?

Is it success, and vulgar wealth, a name?

Is it a weary struggle and mean strife

For earth's low gauds, ambitions, or for fame?

What sow we for? The world? for fleeting time?

Or far-off harvests, grander, more sublime?

The brightest life on earth was one of loss,

The noblest brow was crowned with sharpest thorn,

Has not this consecrated pain, the Cross?

What higher crown can Christian brows adorn?

Be we content to follow on the road

Which men count failure, but which leads to God.

“AND THERE WAS NO MORE SEA.”

(REV. xxi. 1.)

Fain would I for a moment try to cope
With what it holds for us of happy hope,
The blessed promise full of melody
Of John in Patmos—“There was no more sea.”

I GAZE upon wide ocean's gleaming waves,
Far as the verge where sea and sky are one,
And guess the secrets of its sunless caves
Below the bright green waters fathoms down.

What gorges deep ! what hills and vales are there !

What wondrous creatures walk the shell-strewn floor !

What wealth of pearl, and gem, strange flow'rs and fair !

What hidden things the eye cannot explore !—

And hope of perfect knowledge seems to me

Borne on the promise, "There was no more sea."

As shapes of life all strange haunt those blue glooms

Silent as death, secret, and unrevealed ;

As beauty, valour, strength, have there found tombs,

And 'neath the veiling waters lie concealed—

Just so God's ways are covered by the deeps,

The light too dim, our eyes too weak to scan

The wave of mystery that o'er them sweeps,

And hides them from the ken of mortal man—

How blessèd then when all shall fathomed be,

And in the future shall be "no more sea."

"His judgments are a deep," the Psalmist says ;

"His footsteps are not seen, His paths unknown,"

Past finding out His great transcending ways ;

He holdeth back the splendours of His Throne.

But this shall pass, and we shall see His face,

And "know as we are known," and in His light

Shall scale the heights, and scan the depths of grace.

God's ways shall all lie open to our sight,

Their mysteries unfolded, when that He

Fulfils the promise, "There was no more sea."

The sea ! it lifts its waters up on high,
Wild tempests o'er its surface rage and swell ;
Its weltering foam is hurled up to the sky ;
Its billows curl like seething waves of hell,
It dashes onward with a passionate force,
And is with many a wreck and corpse bestrewn ;
Great ships it drives like playthings from their course,
Or into eddying whirlpools sucks them down ;
The quelling then of lawless might to me
Breaks thro' the words, " And there was no more sea."

" The floods have lifted up their voice, O God,
The floods have lifted up their voice," one sings ;
Proud men rebel, and chafe beneath Thy rod,
And of their actions boast themselves the kings :
But Thou, O Lord, art mightier far than all.
" So far,—so far,—no farther," Thou dost say ;
" And Thou dost blow," and all at once they fall ;
A word of Thine all lawless force doth stay ;
So that Thy will omnipotent shall be,
Gleams in the vision, " There was no more sea."

Restless, and sleepless under sun and star,
The sea is full of change, and wakens dread,
Now calm, now with the elements at war,
Now moaning wild as one that wails the dead ;
And ever casting up dank weeds and mire,
As into fury lashed its waters break,

Spending themselves in wrathful, futile ire
Against the Rock they have no power to shake ;
And thus a hope of times from unrest free
These words hold forth, " And there was no more sea."

The sea divides, it separates us here
From those we love, and hold close to our heart ;
It rolls between us and the near and dear ;
Its cruel waters keep us far apart.
We gaze across its billows with a sigh,
In envy of the sea-bird's pinions fleet,
Wishing to borrow wings that we might fly
To those we yearn, but yearn in vain to greet ;
But separation never more shall be
In the bright world " Where there is no more sea."

" And there was no more sea." 'Thrice blessèd thought !
No wreck of life or hope on that fair strand ;
No sad " farewells " with bitter anguish fraught ;
No change or trouble in that glorious land ;
No billows breaking at our feet in foam ;
No partings of the loved and loving more ;
No heart-sick longings for the dear old home,
But everlasting unions on its shore,
Circles unbroken—this, and more when we
Shall reach the haven, " Where is no more sea."

I think of one wild storm : a darkling night ;
A boat tossed on the waters to and fro ;
Where stands a figure in the clear moonlight,
God-like unmoved, whose words majestic flow
Along the waves, in this sublime command,
"Peace, peace ! be still !" The winds forget to sigh ;
The waves sink to a murmur on the strand ;
In the blue lake are glassed the stars on high,
And in that scene is pictured forth to me
The calm eternal "When there is no sea."

All trouble gone, for mystery no place,
Rebellion silenced, cruel wrong no more ;
Instead thereof the light from God's own face,
Eternal joy and rest ; a tranquil shore
Where no storm drives, no brawling tempests come,
But all is peace, and blessedness, and calm ;
The fair green pastures of our Father's home,
The river from the Throne and from the Lamb—
This, and all grace the promise holds in fee,
This glorious promise, "There was no more sea."

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